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Berlin

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Christine

By

Alice Cholmondeley

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CHRISTINE

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CHRISTINE

HARVARD CLUB
OF BOSTON

BY

ALICE CHOLMONDELEY

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CHRISTINE

My daughter Christine, who wrote me these letters, died at a hospital in Stuttgart on the morning of August 8th, 1914, of acute double pneumonia. I have kept the letters private for nearly three years, because, apart from the love in them that made them sacred things in days when we each still hoarded what we had of good, they seemed to me, who did not know the Germans and thought of them, as most people in England for a long while thought, without any bitterness and with a great inclination to explain away and excuse, too extreme and sweeping in their judgments. Now, as the years have passed, and each has been more full of actions on Germany's part difficult to explain except in one way and impossible to excuse, I feel that these letters, giving a picture of the state of mind of the German public immediately before the war, and written by some one who went there enthusiastically ready to like everything and everybody, may have a certain value in helping to

put together a small corner of the great picture of Germany which it will be necessary to keep clear and naked before us in the future if the world is to be saved.

I am publishing the letters just as they came to me, leaving out nothing. We no longer in these days belong to small circles, to limited little groups. We have been stripped of our secrecies and of our private hoards. We live in a great relationship. We share our griefs; and anything there is of love and happiness, any smallest expression of it, should be shared too. This is why I am leaving out nothing in the letters.

The war killed Christine, just as surely as if she had been a soldier in the trenches. I will not write of her great gift, which was extraordinary. That too has been lost to the world, broken and thrown away by the war.

I never saw her again. I had a telegram saying she was dead. I tried to go to Stuttgart, but was turned back at the frontier. The two last letters, the ones from Halle and from Wurzburg, reached me after I knew that she was dead.

ALICE CHOLMONDELEY.

London, May, 1917.

Publishers' Note

The Publishers have considered it best to alter some of the personal names in the following pages.

CHRISTINE

CHRISTINE

Lützowstrasse 49, Berlin,
Thursday, May 28th, 1914.

My blessed little mother,

Here I am safe, and before I unpack or do a thing I'm writing you a little line of love. I sent a telegram at the station, so that you'll know at once that nobody has eaten me on the way, as you seemed rather to fear. It is wonderful to be here, quite on my own, as if I were a young man starting his career. I feel quite solemn, it's such a great new adventure. Kloster can't see me till Saturday, but the moment I've had a bath and tidied up I shall get out my fiddle and see if I've forgotten how to play it between London and Berlin. If only I can be sure you aren't going to be too lonely! Beloved mother, it will only be a year, or even less if I work fearfully hard and really get on, and once it is over a year is nothing. Oh, I know you'll write and tell me you don't mind a bit and rather like it, but you see your

Chris hasn't lived with you all her life for nothing; she knows you very well now,—at least, as much of your dear sacred self that you will show her. Of course I know you're going to be brave and all that, but one can be very unhappy while one is being brave, and besides, one isn't brave unless one is suffering. The worst of it is that we're so poor, or you could have come with me and we'd have taken a house and set up housekeeping together for my year of study. Well, we won't be poor for ever, little mother. I'm going to be your son, and husband, and everything else that loves and is devoted, and I'm going to earn both our livings for us, and take care of you forever. You've taken care of me till now, and now it's my turn. You don't suppose I'm a great hulking person of twenty two, and five foot ten high, and with this lucky facility in fiddling, for nothing? It's a good thing it is summer now, or soon will be, and you can work away in your garden, for I know that is where you are happiest; and by the time it's winter you'll be used to my not being there, and besides there'll be the spring to look forward to, and in the spring I come home, finished. Then I'll start playing and making money, and we'll have the little house we've dreamed of in Lon-

don, as well as our cottage, and we'll be happy ever after. And after all, it is really a beautiful arrangement that we only have each other in the world, because so we each get the other's concentrated love. Else it would be spread out thin over a dozen husbands and brothers and people. But for all that I do wish dear Dad were still alive and with you.

This pension is the top flat of a four-storied house, and there isn't a lift, so I arrived breathless, besides being greatly battered and all crooked after my night sitting up in the train; and Frau Berg came and opened the door herself when I rang, and when she saw me she threw up two immense hands and exclaimed, *"Herr Gott!"*

"Nicht wahr?" I said, agreeing with her, for I knew I must be looking too awful.

She then said, while I stood holding on to my violin-case and umbrella and coat and a paper bag of ginger biscuits I had been solacing myself with in the watches of the night, that she hadn't known when exactly to expect me, so she had decided not to expect me at all, for she had observed that the things you do not expect come to you, and the things you do expect do not; besides, she was a busy woman, and busy women waste no time expecting any-

thing in any case; and then she said, "Come in."

"Seien Sie willkommen, mein Fräulein," she continued, with a sort of stern cordiality, when I was over the threshold, holding out both her hands in massive greeting; and as both mine were full she caught hold of what she could, and it was the bag of biscuits, and it burst.

"Herr Gott!" cried Frau Berg again, as they rattled away over the wooden floor of the passage, *"Herr Gott, die schönen Kakes!"* And she started after them; so I put down my things on a chair and started after them too, and would you believe it the biscuits came out of the corners positively cleaner than when they went in. The floor cleaned the biscuits instead of, as would have happened in London, the biscuits cleaning the floor, so you can be quite happy about its being a clean place.

It is a good thing I learned German in my youth, for even if it is so rusty at present that I can only say things like *Nicht wahr,* I can understand everything, and I'm sure I'll get along very nicely for at least a week on the few words that somehow have stuck in my memory. I've discovered they are:

Nicht wahr,
Wundervoll,
Natürlich,
Herrlich,
Ich gratuliere,
and
Doch.

And the only one with the faintest approach to contentiousness, or acidity, or any of the qualities that don't endear the stranger to the indigenous, is *doch.*

My bedroom looks very clean, and is roomy and comfortable, and I shall be able to work very happily in it, I'm sure. I can't tell you how much excited I am at getting here and going to study under the great Kloster! You darling one, you beloved mother, stinting yourself, scraping your own life bare, so as to give me this chance. *Won't* I work. And *work. And* work. And in a year—no, we won't call it a year, we'll say in a few months—I shall come back to you for good, carrying my sheaves with me. Oh, I hope there *will* be sheaves,—big ones, beautiful ones, to lay at your blessed feet! Now I'll run down and post this. I saw a letter-box a few yards down the street. And then I'll have a bath and go

to bed for a few hours, I think. It is still only nine o'clock in the morning, so I have hours and hours of today before me, and can practise this afternoon and write to you again this evening. So good-bye for a few hours, my precious mother.

Your happy Chris.

May 28th. Evening.

It's very funny here, but quite comfortable. You needn't give a thought to my comforts, mother darling. There's a lot to eat, and if I'm not in clover I'm certainly in feathers,—you should see the immense sackful of them in a dark red sateen bag on my bed! As you have been in Germany trying to get poor Dad well in all those *Kurorten,* you'll understand how queer my bedroom looks, like a very solemn and gloomy drawingroom into which it has suddenly occurred to somebody to put a bed. It is a *tall* room: tall of ceiling, which is painted at the corners with blue clouds and pink cherubim—unmistakable Germans—and tall of door, of which there are three, and tall of window, of which there are two. The windows have long dark curtains of rep or something woolly, and long coffee-coloured lace curtains as well; and there's a big green majolica stove in one corner; and there's a dark brown wall-paper with gilt flowers on it; and an elaborate chandelier hanging from a coloured plaster rosette in the middle of the ceiling, all

twisty and gilt, but it doesn't light,—Wanda, the maid of all work, brings me a petroleum lamp with a green glass shade to it when it gets dusk. I've got a very short bed with a dark red sateen quilt on to which my sheet is buttoned all round, a pillow propped up so high on a wedge stuck under the mattress that I shall sleep sitting up almost straight, and then as a crowning glory the sack of feathers, which will do beautifully for holding me down when I'm having a nightmare. In a corner, with an even greater air of being an afterthought than the bed, there's a very tiny washstand, and pinned on the wall behind it over the part of the wallpaper I might splash on Sunday mornings when I'm supposed really to wash, is a strip of grey linen with a motto worked on it in blue wool:

Eigener Heerd
Ist Goldes Werth

which is a rhyme if you take it in the proper spirit, and isn't if you don't. But I love the sentiment, don't you? It seems peculiarly sound when one is in a room like this in a strange country. And what I'm here for and am going to work for *is* an *eigener Heerd,* with you and me one each side of it warming our

happy toes on our very own fender. Oh, won't it be too lovely, mother darling, to be together again in our very own home! Able to shut ourselves in, shut our front door in the face of the world, and just say to the world, "There now."

There's a little looking-glass on a nail up above the *eigener Heerd* motto, so high that if it hadn't found its match in me I'd only be able to see my eyebrows in it. As it is, I do see as far as my chin. What goes on below that I shall never know while I continue to dwell in the Lützowstrasse. Outside, a very long way down, for the house has high rooms right through and I'm at the top, trams pass almost constantly along the street, clanging their bells. They sound much more aggressive than other trams I have heard, or else it is because my ears are tired tonight. There are double windows, though, which will shut out the noise while I'm practising—and also shut it in. I mean to practise eight hours every day if Kloster will let me,—twelve if needs be, so I've made up my mind only to write to you on Sundays; for if I don't make a stern rule like that I shall be writing to you every day, and then what would happen to the eight hours? I'm going to start them tomorrow, and try and get as ready as

I can for the great man on Saturday. I'm fearfully nervous and afraid, for so much depends on it, and in spite of knowing that somehow from somewhere I've got a kind of gift for fiddling. Heaven knows where *that* little bit of luck came from, seeing that up to now, though you're such a perfect listener, you haven't developed any particular talent for playing anything, have you mother darling; and poor Dad positively preferred to be in a room where music wasn't. Do you remember how he used to say he couldn't think which end of a violin the noises came out of, and whichever it was he wished they wouldn't? But what a mercy, what a real mercy and solution of our difficulties, that I've got this one thing that perhaps I shall be able to do really well. I do thank God on my knees for this.

There are four other boarders here,—three Germans and one Swede, and the Swede and two of the Germans are women; and five outside people come in for the midday dinner every day, all Germans, and four of them are men. They have what they call *Abonnementskarten* for their dinners, so much a month. Frau Berg keeps an Open Midday Table—it is written up on a board on the street railing—and charges 1 mark 25 pfen-

nigs a dinner if a month's worth of them is taken, and 1 mark 50 pfennigs if they're taken singly. So everybody takes the month's worth, and it is going to be rather fun, I think. Today I was solemnly presented to the diners, first collectively by Frau Berg as *Unser junge englische Gast,* Mees— no, I can't write what she made of Cholmondeley, but some day I'll pronounce it for you; and really it is hard on her that her one English guest, who might so easily have been Evans, or Dobbs, or something easy, should have a name that looks a yard long and sounds an inch short—and then each of them to me singly by name. They all made the most beautiful stiff bows. Some of them are students, I gathered; some, I imagine, are staying here because they have no homes,—wash-ups on the shores of life; some are clerks who come in for dinner from their offices near by; and one, the oldest of the men and the most deferred to, is a lawyer called Doctor something. I suppose my being a stranger made them silent, for they were all very silent and stiff, but they'll get used to me quite soon I expect, for didn't you once rebuke me because everybody gets used to me much too soon? Being the newest arrival I sat right at the end of the table in the darkness near the door, and

looking along it towards the light it was really impressive, the concentration, the earnestness, the thoroughness, the skill, with which the two rows of guests dealt with things like gravy on their plates,—elusive, mobile things that are not caught without a struggle. Why, if I can manage to apply myself to fiddling with half that skill and patience I shall be back home again in six months!

I'm so sleepy, I must leave off and go to bed. I did sleep this morning, but only for an hour or two; I was too much excited, I think, at having really got here to be able to sleep. Now my eyes are shutting, but I do hate leaving off, for I'm not going to write again till Sunday, and that is two whole days further ahead, and you know my precious mother it's the only time I shall feel near you, when I'm talking to you in letters. But I simply can't keep my eyes open any longer, so goodnight and good-bye my own blessed one, till Sunday. All my heart's love to you.

Your Chris.

We have supper at eight, and tonight it was cold herrings and fried potatoes and tea. Do you think after a supper like that I shall be able to dream of anybody like you?

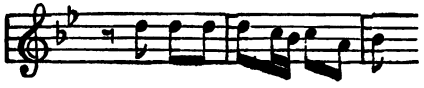
Sunday, May 31st, 1914.

Precious mother,

I've been dying to write you at least six times a day since I posted my letter to you the day before yesterday, but rules are rules, aren't they, especially if one makes them oneself, because then the poor little things are so very helpless, and have to be protected. I couldn't have looked myself in the face if I'd started off by breaking my own rule, but I've been thinking of you and loving you all the time—oh, so much!

Well, I'm *very* happy. I'll say that first, so as to relieve your darling mind. I've seen Kloster, and played to him, and he was fearfully kind and encouraging. He said very much what Ysaye said in London, and Joachim when I was little and played my first piece to him standing on the dining-room table in Eccleston Square and staring fascinated, while I played, at the hairs of his beard, because I'd never been as close as that to a beard before. So I've been walking on clouds with my chin well in the air, as who wouldn't? Kloster

is a little round, red, bald man, the baldest man I've ever seen; quite bald, with hardly any eyebrows, and clean-shaven as well. He's the funniest little thing till you join him to a violin, and then—! A year with him ought to do wonders for me. He says so too; and when I had finished playing—it was the G minor Bach—you know,—the one with the fugue beginning:



he solemnly shook hands with me and said—what do you think he said?—"My Fräulein, when you came in I thought, 'Behold yet one more well-washed, nice-looking, foolish, rich, nothing-at-all English Mees, who is going to waste my time and her money with lessons.' I now perceive that I have to do with an artist. My Fräulein *ich gratuliere.*" And he made me the funniest little solemn bow. I thought I'd die of pride.

I don't know why he thought me rich, seeing how ancient all my clothes are, and especially my blue jersey, which is what I put on because I can play so comfortably in it; except that, as I've already noticed, people here seem persuaded that everybody English *is* rich,—anyhow that they have more money than is

good for them. So I told him of our regrettable financial situation, and said if he didn't mind looking at my jersey it would convey to him without further words how very necessary it is that I should make some money. And I told him I had a mother in just such another jersey, only it is a black one, and therefore somebody had to give her a new one before next winter, and there wasn't anybody to do it except me.

He made me another little bow—(he talks English, so I could say a lot of things)—and he said, "My Fräulein, you need be in no anxiety. Your Frau Mamma will have her jersey. Those fingers of yours are full of that which turns instantly into gold."

So now. What do you think of that, my precious one? He says I've got to turn to and work like a slave, practise with a *sozusagen verteufelte Unermüdlichkeit,* as he put it, and if I rightly develop what he calls my unusual gift,—(I'm telling you exactly, and you know darling mother it isn't silly vainness makes me repeat these things,—I'm past being vain; I'm just bewildered with gratitude that I should happen to be able to fiddle)—at the end of a year, he declares, I shall be playing all over Europe and earning enough to make both you

and me never have to think of money again. Which will be a very blessed state to get to.

You can picture the frame of mind in which I walked down his stairs and along the Potsdamerstrasse home. I felt I could defy everybody now. Perhaps that remark will seem odd to you, but having given you such glorious news and told you how happy I am, I'll not conceal from you that I've been feeling a little forlorn at Frau Berg's. Lonely. Left out. Darkly suspecting that they don't like me.

You see, Kloster hadn't been able to have me go to him till yesterday, which was Saturday, and not then till the afternoon, so that I had had all Friday and most of Saturday to be at a loose end in, except for practising, and though I had got here prepared to find everybody very charming and kind it was somehow gradually conveyed to me, though for ages I thought it must be imagination, that Frau Berg and the other boarders and the *Mittagsgäste* dislike me. Well, I would have accepted it with a depressed resignation as the natural result of being unlikeable, and have tried by being pleasanter and pleasanter—wouldn't it have been a dreadful sight to see me screwing myself up more and more tightly to an awful pleasantness—to induce them to like me, but the people

in the streets don't seem to like me either. They're not friendly. In fact they're rude. And the people in the streets can't really personally dislike me, because they don't know me, so I can't imagine why they're so horrid.

Of course one's ideal when one is in the streets is to be invisible, not to be noticed at all. That's the best thing. And the next best is to be behaved to kindly, with the patient politeness of the London policemen, or indeed of anybody one asks one's way of in England or Italy or France. The Berlin man as he passes mutters the word *Engländerin* as though it were a curse, or says into one's ear—they seem fond of saying or rather hissing this, and seem to think it both crushing and funny,—"*Ros bif,*" and the women stare at one all over and also say to each other *Engländerin.*

You never told me Germans were rude; or is it only in Berlin that they are, I wonder. After my first expedition exploring through the Thiergarten and down Unter den Linden to the museums last Friday between my practisings, I preferred getting lost to asking anybody my way. And as for the policemen, to whom I naturally turned when I wanted help, having been used to turning to policemen ever since I can remember for comfort and guid-

ance, they simply never answered me at all. They just stood and stared with a sort of mocking. And of course they understood, for I got my question all ready beforehand. I longed to hit them,—I who don't ever want to hit anybody, I whom you've so often reprimanded for being too friendly. But the meekest lamb, a lamb dripping with milk and honey, would turn into a lion if its polite approaches were met with such wanton rudeness. I was so indignantly certain that these people, any of them, policemen or policed, would have answered the same question with the most extravagant politeness if I had been an officer, or with an officer. They grovel if an officer comes along; and a woman with an officer might walk on them if she wanted to. They were rude simply because I was alone and a woman. And that being so, though I spoke with the tongue of angels, as St. Paul saith, and as I as a matter of fact did, if what that means is immense mellifluousness, it would avail me nothing.

So when I was out, and being made so curiously to feel conspicuous and disliked, the knowledge that the only alternative was to go back to the muffled unfriendliness at Frau Berg's did make me feel a little forlorn. I can tell you now, because of the joy I've had

since. I don't mind any more. I'm raised up and blessed now. Indeed I feel I've got much more by a long way than my share of good things, and with what Kloster said hugged secretly to my heart I'm placed outside the ordinary toiling-moiling that life means for most women who have got to wring a living out of it without having anything special to wring with. It's the sheerest, wonderfullest, most radiant luck that I've got this. Won't I just work. Won't this funny frowning bedroom of mine become a temple of happiness. I'm going to play Bach to it till it turns beautiful.

I don't know why I always think of Bach first when I write about music. I think of him first as naturally when I think of music as I think of Wordsworth first when I think of poetry. I know neither of them is the greatest, though Bach is the equal of the greatest, but they are the ones I love best. What a world it is, my sweetest little mother! It is so full of beauty. And then there's the hard work that makes everything taste so good. You have to have the hard work; I've found that out. I do think it's a splendid world,—full of glory created in the past and lighting us up while we create still greater glory. One

has only got to shut out the parts of the present one doesn't like, to see this all clear and feel so happy. I shut myself up in this bedroom, this ugly dingy bedroom with its silly heavy trappings, and get out my violin, and instantly it becomes a place of light, a place full of sound,—shivering with light and sound, the light and sound of the beautiful gracious things great men felt and thought long ago. Who cares then about Frau Berg's boarders not speaking to one, and the Berlin streets and policemen being unkind? Actually I forget the long miles and hours I am away from you, the endless long miles and hours that reach from me here to you there, and am happy, oh happy,—so happy that I could cry out for joy. And so I would, I daresay, if it wouldn't spoil the music.

There's Wanda coming to tell me dinner is ready. She just bumps the soup-tureen against my door as she carries it down the passage to the diningroom, and calls out briefly, *"Essen."*

I'll finish this tonight.

Bedtime.

I just want to say goodnight, and tell you, in case you shouldn't have noticed it, how much

your daughter loves you. I mayn't practise on Sundays, because of the *Hausruhe,* Frau Berg says, and so I have time to think; and I'm astonished, mother darling, at the emptiness of life without you. It is as though most of me had somehow got torn off, and I have to manage as best I can with a fragment. What a good thing I feel it so much, for so I shall work all the harder to shorten the time. Hard work is the bridge across which I'll get back to you. You see, you're the one human being I've got in the world who loves me, the only one who is really, deeply, interested in me, who minds if I am hurt and is pleased if I am happy. That's a watery word,—pleased; I should have said exults. It is so wonderful, your happiness in my being happy,—so touching. I'm all melted with love and gratitude when I think of it, and of the dear way you let me do this, come away here and realize my dream of studying with Kloster, when you knew it meant for you such a long row of dreary months alone. Forgive me if I sound sentimental. I know you will, so I needn't bother to ask. That's what I so love about you,—you always understand, you never mind. I can talk to you; and however idiotic I am, and whatever sort of a fool,—blind, unkind,

ridiculous, obstinate or wilful—take your choice, little sweet mother, you'll remember occasions that were fitted by each of these—you look at me with those shrewd sweet eyes that always somehow have a laugh in them, and say some little thing that shows you are brushing aside all the ugly froth of nonsense, and are intelligently and with perfect detachment searching for the reason. And having found the reason you understand and forgive; for of course there always *is* a reason when ordinary people, not born fiends, are disagreeable. I'm sure that's why we've been so happy together,—because you've never taken anything I've done or said that was foolish or unkind *personally*. You've always known it was just so much irrelevant rubbish, just an excrescence, a passing sickness; never, never your real Chris who loves you.

Good-bye, my own blessed mother. It's long past bedtime. Tomorrow I'm to have my first regular lesson with Kloster. And tomorrow I ought to get a letter from you. You will take care of yourself, won't you? You wouldn't like me to be anxious all this way off, would you? Anxious, and not sure?

Your Chris.

Berlin, Tuesday, June 2nd, 1914.

Darling mother, I've just got your two letters, two lovely long ones at once, and I simply can't wait till next Sunday to tell you how I rejoiced over them, so I'm going to squander 20 pfennigs just on that. I'm not breaking my rule and writing on a day that isn't Sunday, because I'm not really writing. This isn't a letter, it's a kiss. How glad I am you're so well and getting on so comfortably. And I'm well and happy too, because I'm so busy,—you can't think *how* busy. I'm working harder than I've ever done in my life, and Kloster is pleased with me. So now that I've had letters from you there seems very little left in the world to want, and I go about on the tips of my toes. Good-bye my beloved one, till Sunday.

Chris.

Oh, I must just tell you that at my lesson yesterday I played the Ernst F♯ minor concerto,—the virtuoso, firework thing, you know, with Kloster putting in bits of the orchestra

part on the piano every now and then because he wanted to see what I could do in the way of gymnastics. He laughed when I had finished, and patted my shoulder, and said, "Very good acrobatics. Now we will do no more of them. We will apply ourselves to real music." And he said I was to play him what I could of the Bach Chaconne.

I was so happy, little mother. Kloster leading me about among the wonders of Bach, was like being taken by the hand by some great angel and led through heaven.

Berlin, Sunday, June 7th, 1914.

On Sunday mornings, darling mother, directly I wake I remember it is my day for being with you. I can hardly be patient with breakfast, and the time it takes to get done with those thick cups of coffee that are so thick that, however deftly I drink, drops always trickle down what would be my beard if I had one. And I choke over the rolls, and I spill things in my hurry to run away and talk to you. I got another letter from you yesterday, and Hilda Seeberg, a girl boarding here and studying painting, said when she met me in the passage after I had been reading it in my room, "You have had a letter from your *Frau Mutter, nicht?*" So you see your letters shine in my face.

Don't be afraid I won't take enough exercise. I go for an immense walk directly after dinner every day, a real quick hot one through the Thiergarten. The weather is fine, and Berlin I suppose is at its best, but I don't think it looks very nice after London. There's no mystery about it, no atmosphere; it just blares

away at you. It has everything in it that a city ought to have,—public buildings, statues, fountains, parks, broad streets; and it is about as comforting and lovable as the latest thing in workhouses. It looks disinfected; it has just that kind of rather awful cleanness.

At dinnner they talk of its beauty and its perfections till I nearly go to sleep. You know how oddly sleepy one gets when one isn't interested. They've left off being silent now, and have gone to the other extreme, and from not talking to me at all have jumped to talking to me all together. They tell me over and over again that I'm in the most beautiful city in the world. You never knew such eagerness and persistence as these German boarders have when it comes to praising what is theirs, and also when it comes to criticizing what isn't theirs. They're so funny and personal. They say, for instance, London is too hideous for words, and then they look at me defiantly, as though they had been insulting some personal defect of mine and meant to brazen it out. They point out the horrors of the slums to me as though the slums were on my face. They tell me pityingly what they look like, what terrible blots and deformities they are, and how I —they say England, but no one could dream

from their manner that it wasn't me—can never hope to be regarded as fit for self-respecting European society while these spots and sore places are not purged away.

The other day they assured me that England as a nation is really unfit for any decent other nation to know politically, but they added, with stiff bows in my direction, that sometimes the individual inhabitant of that low-minded and materialistic country is not without amiability, especially if he or she is by some miracle without the lofty, high-nosed manner that as a rule so regrettably characterizes the unfortunate people. *"Sie sind so hochnäsig,"* the bank clerk who sits opposite me had shouted out, pointing an accusing finger at me; and for a moment I was so startled that I thought something disastrous had happened to my nose, and my anxious hand flew up to it. Then they laughed; and it was after that that they made the speech conceding individual amiability here and there.

I sit neatly in my chair while this sort of talk goes on—and it goes on at every meal now that they have got over the preliminary stage of icy coldness towards me—and I try to be sprightly, and bandy my six German words about whenever they seem appropriate. Im-

agine your poor Chris trying to be sprightly with eleven Germans—no, ten Germans, for the eleventh is a Swede and doesn't say anything. And the ten Germans, including Frau Berg, all fix their eyes reproachfully on me while as one man they tell me how awful my country is. Do people in London boarding houses tell the German boarders how awful Germany is, I wonder? I don't believe they do. And I wish they would leave me alone about the Boer war. I've tried to explain my extreme youth at the time it was going on, but they still appear to hold me directly responsible for it. The fingers that have been pointed at me down that table on account of the Boer war! They raise them at me, and shake them, and tell me of the terrible things the English did, and when I ask them how they know, they say it was in the newspapers; and when I ask them what newspapers, they say theirs; and when I ask them how they know it was true, they say they know because it was in the newspapers. So there we are, stuck. I take to English when the worst comes to the worst, and they flounder in after me.

It is the funniest thing, their hostility to England, and the queer, reluctant, and yet passionate admiration that goes with it. It is

like some girl who can't get a man she admires very much to notice her. He stays indifferent, while she gets more exasperated the more indifferent he stays; exasperated with the bitterness of thwarted love. One day at dinner, when they had all been thumping away at me, this flashed across me as the explanation, and I exclaimed in English, "Why, you're in love with us!"

Twenty round eyes stared at me, sombrely at first, not understanding, and then with horror slowly growing in them.

"In love with you? In love with England?" cried Frau Berg, the carving knife suspended in the air while she stared at me. *"Nein, aber so was!"* And she let down her heavy fists, knife and all, with a thud on the table.

I thought I had best stand up to them, having started off so recklessly, and tried to lash myself into bravery by remembering how full I was of the blood of all the Cholmondeleys, let alone those relations of yours alleged to have fought alongside the Black Prince; so though I wished there were several of me rather than only one, I said with courage and obstinacy, "Passionately."

You can't think how seriously they took it. They all talked at once, very loud. They were

all extremely angry. I wished I had kept quiet, for I couldn't elaborate my idea in my limping German, and it was quite difficult to go on smiling and behaving as though they were all not being rude, for I don't think they *mean* to be rude, and I was afraid, if I showed a trace of thinking they were that they might notice they were, and then they would have felt so uncomfortable, and the situation would have become, as they say, *peinlich.*

Four of the Daily Dinner Guests are men, and one of the boarders is a man; and these five men and Frau Berg were the vociferous ones. They exclaimed things like *"Nein, so was!"* and, *"Diese englische Hochmut!,"* and single words like *unerhört;* and then one of them, called Herr Doctor Krummlaut, who is a lawyer and a widower and much esteemed by the rest, detached himself from them and made me a carefully patient speech, in which he said how sorry they all were to see so young and gifted a lady,—(he bowed, and I bowed)—oh yes, he said, raising his hand as though to ward off any modest objections I might be going to make, only I wasn't going to make any, he had heard that I was undoubtedly gifted, and not only gifted but also, he would not be deterred from saying, and he felt sure his col-

leagues at the table would not be deterred from saying either if they were in his place, a lady of personal attractions,—(he bowed and I bowed,)—how sorry they all were to see a young Fräulein with these advantages, filled at the same time with opinions and views that were not only highly unsuitable to her sex but were also, in any sex, so terribly wrong. Every lady, he said, should have some knowledge of history, and sufficient acquaintance with the three kinds of politics,—*Politik, Weltpolitik,* and *Realpolitik,* to enable her to avoid wrong and frivolous conclusions such as the one the young Fräulein had just informed them she had reached, and to listen intelligently to her husband or son when they discuss these matters. He said a great deal more, about a woman knowing these things just enough but not too well, for her intelligence must not be strained because of her supreme function of being the cradle of the race; and the cradle part of her, I gather, isn't so useful if she is allowed to develop the other part of her beyond what is necessary for making an agreeable listener.

It was no use even trying to explain what I had meant about Germany really being in love with England, because I hadn't got words

enough; but that is exactly the impression I've received from my brief experiences of one corner of its life. In this small corner of it, anyhow, it behaves exactly like a woman who is so unlucky as to love somebody who doesn't care about her. She naturally, I imagine,—for I can only guess at these enslavements,—is very much humiliated and angry, and all the more because the loved and hated one—isn't it possible to love and hate at the same time, little mother? I can imagine it quite well—is so indifferent as to whether she loves or hates. And whichever she does, he is polite,—"Always gentleman," as the Germans say. Which is, naturally, maddening.

Evening.

Do you know I wrote to you the whole morning? I wrote and wrote, with no idea how time was passing, and was astonished and indignant, for I haven't half told you all I want to, when I was called to dinner. It seemed like shutting a door on you and leaving you outside without any dinner, to go away and have it without you.

If it weren't for its being my day with you I don't know what I'd do with Sundays. I would hate them. I'm not allowed to play on

Sundays, because practising is forbidden on that day, and, as Frau Berg said, how is she to know if I am practising or playing? Besides, it would disturb the others, which of course is true, for they all rest on Sundays, getting up late, sleeping after dinner, and not going out till they have had coffee about five. Today, when I hoped they had all gone out, I had such a longing to play a little that I muted my strings and played to myself in a whisper what I could remember of a very beautiful thing of Ravel's that Kloster showed me the other day, —the most haunting, exquisite thing; and I hummed the weird harmonies as I went along, because they are what is so particularly wonderful about it. Well, it really was a whisper, and I had to bend my head right over the violin to hear it at all whenever a tram passed, yet in five minutes Frau Berg appeared, unbuttoned and heated from her *Mittagsruhe,* and requested me to have some consideration for others as well as for the day.

I was very much ashamed of myself, besides feeling as though I were fifteen and caught at school doing something wicked. I didn't mind not having consideration for the day, because I think Ravel being played on it can't do Sunday anything but good, but I did mind having dis-

turbed the other people in the flat. I could only say I was sorry, and wouldn't do it again, —just like an apologetic schoolgirl. But what do you think I wanted to do, little mother? Run to Frau Berg, and put my arms round her neck, and tell her I was lonely and wanting you, and would she mind just pretending she was fond of me for a moment? She did look so comfortable and fat and kind, standing there filling up the doorway, and she wasn't near enough for me to see her eyes, and it is her eyes that make one not want to run to her.

But of course I didn't run. I knew too well that she wouldn't understand. And indeed I don't know why I should have felt such a longing to run into somebody's arms. Perhaps it was because writing to you brings you so near to me that I realize how far away you are. During the week I work, and while I work I forget; and there's the excitement of my lessons, and the joy of hearing Kloster appreciate and encourage. But on Sundays the day is all you, and then I feel what months can mean when they have to be lived through each in turn and day by day before one gets back to the person one loves. Why are you so dear, my

darling mother? If you were an ordinary mother I'd be so much more placid. I wouldn't mind not being with an ordinary mother. When I look at other people's mothers I think I'd rather like not being with them. But having known what it is to live in love and understanding with you, it wants a great deal of persistent courage, the sort that goes on steadily with no intervals, to make one able to do without it.

Now please don't think I am fretting, will you, because I'm not. It's only that I love you. We're such *friends.* You always understand, you are never shocked. I can say whatever comes into my head to you. It is as good as saying one's prayers. One never stops in those to wonder whether one is shocking God, and that is what one loves God for,—because we suppose he always understands, and therefore forgives; and how much more—is this very wicked?—one loves one's mother who understands, because, you see, there she is, and one can kiss her as well. There's a great virtue in kissing, I think; an amazing comfort in just *touching* the person one loves. Good-night, most blessed little mother, and good-bye for a week. Your Chris.

Perhaps I might write a little note—not a letter, just a little note,—on Wednesdays? What do you think? It would be nothing more, really, than a postcard, except that it would be in an envelope.

Berlin, Sunday, June 14th, 1914.

Well, I didn't write on Wednesday, I resisted. (Good morning, darling mother.) I knew quite well it wouldn't be a postcard, or anything even remotely related to the postcard family. It would be a letter. A long letter. And presently I'd be writing every day, and staying all soft; living in the past, instead of getting on with my business, which is the future. That is what I've got to do at this moment: not think too much of you and home, but turn my face away from both those sweet, desirable things so that I may get back to them quicker. It's true we haven't got a home, if a home is a house and furniture; but home to your Chris is where you are. Just simply anywhere and everywhere you are. It's very convenient, isn't it, to have it so much concentrated and so movable. Portable, I might say, seeing how little you are and how big I am.

But you know, darling mother, it makes it easier for me to harden and look ahead with my chin in the air rather than over my shoul-

der back at you when I see, as I do see all day long, the extreme sentimentality of the Germans. It is very surprising. They're the oddest mixture of what really is a brutal hardness, the kind of hardness that springs from real fundamental differences from ours in their attitude towards life, and a squashiness that leaves one with one's mouth open. They can't bear to let a single thing that has happened to them ever, however many years ago, drop away into oblivion and die decently in its own dust. They hold on to it, and dig it out that day year and that day every year, for years apparently, —I expect for all their lives. When they leave off really feeling about it—which of course they do, for how can one go on feeling about a thing forever?—they start pretending that they feel. Conceive going through life clogged like that, all one's pores choked with the dust of old yesterdays. I picture the Germans trailing through life more and more heavily as they grow old, hauling an increasing number of anniversaries along with them, rolling them up as they go, dragging at each remove a lengthening chain, as your dear Goldsmith says,—and if he didn't, or it wasn't, you'll rebuke me and tell me who did and what it was, for you know I've no books here, except

those two that are married as securely on one's tongue as Tennyson and Browning, or Arnold Bennet and his, I imagine reluctant, bride, H. G. Wells,—I mean Shakespeare and the Bible.

I went into Hilda Seeberg's room the other day to ask her for some pins, and found her sitting in front of a photograph of her father, a cross-looking old man with a twirly moustache and a bald head; and she had put a wreath of white roses round the frame and tied it with a black bow, and there were two candles lit in front of it, and Hilda had put on a black dress, and was just sitting there gazing at it with her hands in her lap. I begged her pardon, and was going away again quickly, but she called me back.

"I celebrate," she said.

"Oh," said I politely, but without an idea what she meant.

"It is my Papa's birthday today," she said, pointing to the photograph.

"Is it?" I said, surprised, for I thought I remembered she had told me he was dead. "But didn't you say—"

"Yes. Certainly I told you Papa was dead since five years."

"Then why—?"

"But *liebes Fräulein,* he still continues to have birthdays," she said, staring at me in real surprise, while I stared back at her in at least equally real surprise.

"Every year," she said, "the day comes round on which Papa was born. Shall he, then, merely because he is with God, not have it celebrated? And what would people think if I did not? They would think I had no heart."

After that I began to hope there would be a cake, for they have lovely birthday cakes here, and it is the custom to give a slice of them to every one who comes near you. So I looked round the room out of the corners of my eyes, discreetly, lest I should seem to be as greedy as I was, and I lifted my nose a little and waved it cautiously about, but I neither saw nor smelt a cake. Frau Berg had a birthday three days ago, and there was a heavenly cake at it, a great flat thing with cream in it, that one loved so that first one wanted to eat it and then to sit on it and see all the cream squash out at the sides; but evidently the cake is the one thing you don't have for your birthday after you are dead. I don't want to laugh, darling mother, and I know well enough what it is to lose one's

beloved Dad, but you see Hilda had shown me her family photographs only the other day, for we are making friends in a sort of flabby, hesitating way, and when she got to the one of her father she said with perfect frankness that she hadn't liked him, and that it had been an immense relief when he died. "He prevented my doing anything," she said, frowning at the photograph, "except that which increased his comforts."

I asked Kloster about anniversaries when I went for my lesson on Friday. He is a very human little man, full of sympathy,—the sort of comprehending sympathy that laughs and understands together, yet his genius seems to detach him from other Germans, for he criticizes them with a dispassionate thoroughness that is surprising. The remarks he makes about the Kaiser, for instance, whom he irreverently alludes to as S. M.—(short and rude for *Seine Majestät*)—simply make me shiver in this country of *lèse majesté*. In England, where we can say what we like, I have never heard anybody say anything disrespectful about the King. Here, where you go to prison if you laugh even at officials, even at a policeman, at anything whatever in buttons, for that is the punishable offence of *Beamten-*

beleidigung—haven't they got heavenly words—Kloster and people I have come across in his rooms say what they like; and what they like is very rude indeed about that sacred man the Kaiser, who doesn't appear to be at all popular. But then Kloster belongs to the intelligents, and his friends are all people of intelligence, and that sort of person doesn't care very much, I think, for absolute monarchs. Kloster says they're anachronisms, that the world is too old for them, too grown-up for pretences and decorations. And when I went for my lesson on Friday I found his front door wreathed with evergreens and paper flowers,—pretences and decorations crawling even round Kloster—and I went in very reluctantly, not knowing what sort of a memorial celebration I was going to tumble into. But it was only that his wife—I didn't know he had a wife, he seemed altogether so happily unmarried—was coming home. She had been away for three weeks; not nearly long enough, you and I and others of our self-depreciatory and self-critical country would think, to deserve an evergreen garland round our door on coming back. He laughed when I told him I had been afraid to come in lest I should disturb retrospective obsequies.

"We are still so near, my dear Mees Chrees," he said, shrugging a fat shoulder—he asked me what I was called at home, and I said you called me Chris, and he said he would, with my permission, also call me Chrees, but with Mees in front of it to show that though he desired to be friendly he also wished to remain respectful —"we are still so near as a nation to the child and to the savage. To the clever child, and the powerful savage. We like simple and gross emotions and plenty of them; obvious tastes in our food and our pleasures, and a great deal of it; fat in our food, and fat in our women. And, like the child, when we mourn we mourn to excess, and enjoy ourselves in that excess; and, like the savage, we are afraid, and therefore hedge ourselves about with observances, celebrations, cannon, kings. In no other country is there more than one king. In ours we find three and an emperor necessary. The savage who fears all things does not fear more than we Germans. We fear other nations, we fear other people, we fear public opinion to an extent incredible, and tremble before the opinion of our servants and tradespeople; we fear our own manners and therefore are obliged to preserve the idiotic practice of duelling, in which as often as not the man whose honour is being

satisfied is the one who is killed; we fear all those above us, of whom there are invariably a great many; we fear all officials, and our country drips with officials. The only person we do not fear is God."

"But—" I began, remembering their motto, bestowed on them by Bismarck.

"Yes, yes, I know," he interrupted. "It is not, however, true. The contrary is the truth. We Germans fear not God, but everything else in the world. It is only fear that makes us polite, fear of the duel; for, like the child and the savage, we have not had time to acquire the habit of good manners, the habit which makes manners inevitable and invariable, and it is not natural to us to be polite. We are polite only by the force of fear. Consequently—for all men must have their relaxations—whenever we meet the weak, the beneath us, the momentarily helpless, we are brutal. It is an immense relief to be for a moment natural. Every German welcomes even the smallest opportunity."

You would be greatly interested in Kloster, I'm certain. He sits there, his fiddle on his fat little knees, his bow punctuating his sentences

with quivers and raps, his shiny bald head reflecting the light from the window behind him, and his eyes coming very much out of his face, which is excessively red. He looks like an amiable prawn; not in the least like a person with an active and destructive mind, not in the least like a great musician. He has the very opposite of the bushy eyebrows and overhanging forehead and deep set eyes and lots of hair you're supposed to have if you've got much music in you. He came over to me the other day after I had finished playing, and stretched up—he's a good bit smaller than I am—and carefully drew his finger along my eyebrows, each in turn. I couldn't think what he was doing.

"My finger is clean, Mees Chrees," he said, seeing me draw back. "I have just wiped it. Be not, therefore, afraid. But you have the real Beethoven brow—the very shape—and I must touch it. I regret if it incommodes you, but I must touch it. I have seen no such resemblance to the brow of the Master. You might be his child."

I needn't tell you, darling mother, that I went back to the boarders and the midday guests not minding them much. If I only could talk German properly I would have

loved to have leant across the table to Herr Mannfried, an unwholesome looking young man who comes in to dinner every day from a bank in the Potsdamerstrasse, and is very full of that hatred which is really passion for England, and has pale hair and a mouth exactly like two scarlet slugs—I'm sorry to be so horrid, but it *is* like two scarlet slugs—and said,—"Have you noticed that I have a *Beethovenkopf?* What do you think of me, an *Engländerin,* having such a thing? One of your own great men says so, so it must be true."

We are studying the Bach Chaconne now. He is showing me a different reading of it, his idea. He is going to play it at the Philarmonie here next week. I wish you could hear him. He was intending to go to London this season and play with a special orchestra of picked players, but has changed his mind. I asked him why, and he shrugged his shoulder and said his agent, who arranges these things, seemed to think he had better not. I asked him why again—you know my persistency—for I can't conceive why it should be better not for London to have such a joy and for him to give it, but he only shrugged his shoulder again, and said he always did what his agent told him to do. "My agent knows his business, my dear

Mees Chrees," he said. "I put my affairs in his hands, and having done so I obey him. It saves trouble. Obedience is a comfortable thing."

"Then why—" I began, remembering the things he says about kings and masters and persons in authority; but he picked up his violin and began to play a bit. "See," he said, "this is how—"

And when he plays I can only stand and listen. It is like a spell. One stands there, and forgets. . . .

Evening.

I've been reading your last darling letter again, so full of love, so full of thought for me, out in a corner of the Thiergarten this afternoon, and I see that while I'm eagerly writing and writing to you, page after page of the things I want to tell you, I forget to tell you the things you want to know. I believe I never answer *any* of your questions! It's because I'm so all right, so comfortable as far as my body goes, that I don't remember to say so. I have heaps to eat, and it is very satisfying food, being German, and will make me grow sideways quite soon, I should think, for Frau Berg fills us up daily with dumplings, and I'm

certain they must end by somehow showing; and I haven't had a single cold since I've been here, so I'm outgrowing them at last; and I'm not sitting up late reading,—I couldn't if I tried, for Wanda, the general servant, who is general also in her person rather than particular—aren't I being funny—comes at ten o'clock each night on her way to bed and takes away my lamp.

"Rules," said Frau Berg briefly, when I asked if it wasn't a little early to leave me in the dark. "And you are not left in the dark. Have I not provided a candle and matches for the chance infirmities of the night?"

But the candle is cheap and dim, so I don't sit up trying to read by that. I preserve it wholly for the infirmities.

I've been in the Thiergarten most of the afternoon, sitting in a green corner I found where there is some grass and daisies down by a pond and away from a path, and accordingly away from the Sunday crowds. I watched the birds, and read the Winter's Tale, and picked some daisies, and felt very happy. The daisies are in a saucer before me at this moment. Everything smelt so good,—so warm, and sweet, and young, with the leaves on the oaks still little and delicate. Life is an admirable

arrangement, isn't it, little mother. It is so clever of it to have a June in every year and a morning in every day, let alone things like birds, and Shakespeare, and one's work. You've sometimes told me, when I was being particularly happy, that there were even greater happiness ahead for me,—when I have a lover, you said; when I have a husband; when I have a child. I suppose you know, my wise, beloved mother; but the delight of work, of doing the work well that one is best fitted for, will be very hard to beat. It is an exultation, a rapture, that manifest progress to better and better results through one's own effort. After all, being obliged on Sundays to do nothing isn't so bad, because then I have time to think, to step back a little and look at life.

See what a quiet afternoon sunning myself among daisies has done for me. A week ago I was measuring the months to be got through before being with you again, in dismay. Now I feel as if I were very happily climbing up a pleasant hill, just steep enough to make me glad I can climb well, and all the way is beautiful and safe, and on the top there is you. To get to the top will be perfect joy, but the getting there is very wonderful too. You'll judge from all this that I've had a happy week, that

work is going well, and that I'm hopeful and confident. I mustn't be too confident, I know, but confidence is a great thing to work on. I've never done anything good on days of dejection.

Goodnight, dear mother. I feel so close to you tonight, just as if you were here in the room with me, and I had only to put out my finger and touch Love. I don't believe there's much in this body business. It is only spirit that matters really; and nothing can stop your spirit and mine being together.

Your Chris.

Still, a body is a great comfort when it comes to wanting to kiss one's darling mother.

Berlin, Sunday, June 21st, 1914.

My precious mother,

The weeks fly by, full of work and *Weltpolitik.* They talk of nothing here at meals but this *Weltpolitik.* I've just been having a dose of it at breakfast. To say that the boarders are interested in it is to speak feebly: they blaze with interest, they explode with it, they scorch and sizzle. And they are so pugnacious! Not to each other, for contrary to the attitude at Kloster's they are knit together by the toughest band of uncritical and obedient admiration for everything German, but they are pugnacious to the Swede girl and myself. Especially to myself. There is a holy calm about the Swede girl that nothing can disturb. She has an enviable gift for getting on with her meals and saying nothing. I wish I had it. Directly I have learned a new German word I want to say it. I accumulate German words every day, of course, and there's something in my nature and something in the way I'm talked at and to at Frau Berg's table that makes me want to say all the words I've got as

quickly as possible. And as I can't string them into sentences my conversation consists of single words, which produce a very odd effect, quite unintended, of detached explosions. When I've come to the end of them I take to English, and the boarders plunge in after me, and swim or drown in it according to their several ability.

It's queer, the atmosphere here,—in this house, in the streets, wherever one goes. They all seem to be in a condition of tension—of intense, tightly-strung waiting, very like that breathless expectancy in the last act of "Tristan" when Isolde's ship is sighted and all the violins hang high up on to a shrill, intolerably eager note. There's a sort of fever. And the big words! I thought Germans were stolid, quiet people. But how they talk! And always in capital letters. They talk in tremendous capitals about what they call the *deutsche Standpunkt;* and the *deutsche Standpunkt* is the most wonderful thing you ever came across. Butter wouldn't melt in its mouth. It is too great and good, almost, they give one to understand, for a world so far behind in high qualities to appreciate. No other people has anything approaching it. As far as I can make out, stripped of its decorations its main

idea is that what Germans do is right and what other people do is wrong. Even when it is exactly the same thing. And also, that wrong becomes right directly it has anything to do with Germans. Not with *a* German. The individual German can and does commit every sort of wrong, just as other individuals do in other countries, and he gets punished for them with tremendous harshness; Kloster says with unfairness. But directly he is in the plural and becomes *Wir Deutschen,* as they are forever saying, his crimes become virtues. As a body he purifies, he has a purging quality. To-day they were saying at breakfast that if a crime is big enough, if it is on a grand scale, it leaves off being a crime, for then it is a success, and success is always virtue,—that is, I gather, if it is a German success; if it is a French one it is an outrage. You mustn't rob a widow, for instance, they said, because that is stupid; the result is small and you may be found out and be cut by your friends. But you may rob a great many widows and it will be a successful business deal. No one will say anything, because you have been clever and successful.

I know this view is not altogether unknown in other countries, but they don't hold it

deliberately as a whole nation. Among other things that Hilda Seeberg's father did which roused her unforgiveness was just this,—to rob too few widows, come to grief over it, and go bankrupt for very little. She told me about it in an outburst of dark confidence. Just talking of it made her eyes black with anger. It was so terrible, she said, to smash for a small amount,—such an overwhelming shame for the Seeberg family, whose poverty thus became apparent and unhideable. If one smashes, she said, one does it for millions, otherwise one doesn't smash. There is something so *chic* about millions, she said, that whether you make them or whether you lose them you are equally well thought-of and renowned.

"But it is better to—well, disappoint few widows than many," I suggested, picking my words.

"For less than a million marks," she said, eyeing me sternly, "it is a disgrace to fail."

They're funny, aren't they. I'm greatly interested. They remind me more and more of what Kloster says they are, clever children. They have the unmoral quality of children. I listen—they treat me as if I were the audience, and they address themselves in a bunch to my corner—and I put in one of my words now

and then, generally with an unfortunate effect, for they talk even louder after that, and then presently the men get up and put their heels together and make a stiff inclusive bow and disappear, and Frau Berg folds up her napkin and brushes the crumbs out of her creases and says, "*Ja, ja,*" with a sigh, as a sort of final benediction on the departed conversation, and then rises slowly and locks up the sugar, and then treads heavily away down the passage and has a brief skirmish in the kitchen with Wanda, who daily tries to pretend there hadn't been any pudding left over, and then treads heavily back again to her bedroom, and shuts herself in till four o'clock for her *Mittagsruhe;* and the other boarders drift away one by one, and I run out for a walk to get unstiffened after having practised all the morning, and as I walk I think over what they've been saying, and try to see things from their angle, and simply *can't.*

On Tuesdays and Fridays I have my lesson, and tell Kloster about them. He says they're entirely typical of the great bulk of the nation. "*Wir Deutschen,*" he says, and laughs, "are the easiest people in the world to govern, because we are obedient and inflammable. We have that obedience of mind so convenient to Au-

thority, and we are inflammable because we are greedy. Any prospect held out to us of getting something belonging to some one else sets us instantly alight. Dangle some one else's sausage before our eyes, and we will go anywhere after it. Wonderful material for S. M." And he adds a few irreverences.

Last Wednesday was his concert at the Philarmonie. He played like an angel. It was so strange, the fat, red, more than commonplace-looking little bald man, with his quite expressionless face, his wilfully stupid face—for I believe he does it on purpose, that blankness, that bulgy look of one who never thinks and only eats—and then the heavenly music. It was as strange and arresting as that other mixture, that startling one of the men who sell flowers in the London streets and the flowers they sell. What does it look like, those poor ragged men shuffling along the kerb, and in their arms, rubbing against their dirty shoulders, great baskets of beauty, baskets heaped up with charming aristocrats, gracious and delicate purities of shape and colour and scent. The strangest effect of all is when they happen, round about Easter, to be selling only lilies, and the unearthly purity of the lilies shines on the passersby from close to the seller's terrible

face. Christ must often have looked like that, when he sat close up to Pharisees.

But although Kloster's music was certainly as beautiful as the lilies, he himself wasn't like those tragic sellers. It was only that he was so very ordinary,—a little man compact, apparently, of grossness, and the music he was making was so divine. It was that marvellous French and Russian stuff. I must play it to you, and play it to you, till you love it. It's like nothing there has ever been. It is of an exquisite youth,—untouched, fearless, quite heedless of tradition, going its own way straight through and over difficulties and prohibitions that for centuries have been supposed final. People like Wagner and Strauss and the rest seem so much sticky and insanitary mud next to these exquisite young ones, and so very old; and not old and wonderful like the great men, Beethoven and Bach and Mozart, but uglily old like a noisy old lady in a yellow wig.

The audience applauded, but wasn't quite sure. Such a master as Kloster, and one of their own flesh and blood, is always applauded, but I think the irregularity, the utter carelessness of the music, its apparently accidental beauty, was difficult for them. Germans have

to have beauty explained to them and accounted for,—stamped first by an official, authorized, before they can be comfortable with it. I sat in a corner and cried, it was so lovely. I couldn't help it. I hid away and pulled my hat over my face and tried not to, for there was a German in eyeglasses near me, who, perceiving I wanted to hide, instantly spent his time staring at me to find out why. The music held all things in it that I have known or guessed, all the beauty, the wonder, of life and death and love. I *recognized* it. I almost called out, "Yes—of course—*I* know that too."

Afterwards I would have liked best to go home and to sleep with the sound of it still in my heart, but Kloster sent round a note saying I was to come to supper and meet some people who would be useful for me to know. One of his pupils, who brought the note, had been ordered to pilot me safely to the house, it being late, and as we walked and Kloster drove in somebody's car he was there already when we arrived, busy opening beer bottles and looking much more appropriate than he had done an hour earlier. I can't tell you how kindly he greeted me, and with what charming little elucidatory comments he presented me to his wife and the other guests. He actually seemed

proud of me. Think how I must have glowed.

"This is Mees Chrees," he said, taking my hand and leading me into the middle of the room. "I will not and cannot embark on her family name, for it is one of those English names that a prudent man avoids. Nor does it matter. For in ten years—nay, in five—all Europe will have learned it by heart."

There were about a dozen people, and we had beer and sandwiches and were very happy. Kloster sat eating sandwiches and staring benevolently at us all, more like an amiable and hospitable prawn than ever. You don't know, little mother, how wonderful it is that he should say these praising things of me, for I'm told by other pupils that he is dreadfully severe and disagreeable if he doesn't think one is getting on. It was immensely kind of him to ask me to supper, for there was somebody there, a Gräfin Köseritz, whose husband is in the ministry, and who is herself very influential and violently interested in music. She pulls most of the strings at Bayreuth, Kloster says, more of them even than Frau Cosima now that she is old, and gets one into anything she likes if she thinks one is worth while. She was very amiable and gracious, and told me I must

marry a German! Because, she said, all good music is by rights, by natural rights, the property of Germany.

I wanted to say what about Debussy, and Ravel, and Stravinski, but I didn't.

She said how much she enjoyed these informal evenings at Kloster's, and that she had a daughter about my age who was devoted, too, to music, and a worshipper of Kloster's.

I asked if she was there, for there was a girl away in a corner, but she looked shocked, and said "Oh no"; and after a pause she said again, "Oh no. One doesn't bring one's daughter here."

"But I'm a daughter," I said,—I admit tactlessly; and she skimmed away over that to things that sounded wise but weren't really, about violins and the technique of fiddling.

Not that I haven't already felt it, the cleavage here in the classes; but this was my first experience of the real thing, the real Junker lady —the Köseritzes are Prussians. She, being married and mature, can dabble if she likes in other sets, can come down as a bright patroness from another world and clean her feathers in a refreshing mud bath, as Kloster put it, com-

menting on his supper party at my lesson last Friday; but she would carefully keep her young daughter out of it.

They made me play after supper. Actually Kloster brought out his Strad and said I should play on that. It was evident he thought it important for me to play to these particular people, so though I was dreadfully taken aback and afraid I was going to disgrace my master, I was so much touched by this kindness and care for my future that I obeyed without a word. I played the Kreutzer Sonata, and an officer played the accompaniment, a young man who looked so fearfully smart and correct and wooden that I wondered why he was there till he began to play, and then I knew; and as soon as I started I forgot the people sitting round so close to me, so awkwardly and embarrassingly near. The Strad fascinated me. It seemed to be playing by itself, singing to me, telling me strange and beautiful secrets. I stood there just listening to it.

They were all very kind and enthusiastic, and talked eagerly to each other of a new star, a *trouvaille*. Think of your Chris, only the other day being put in a corner by you in just expiation of her offensiveness—it really feels

as if it were yesterday—think of her being a new, or anything else, star! But I won't be too proud, because people are always easily kind after supper, and besides they had been greatly stirred all the evening at the concert by Kloster's playing. He was pleased too, and said some encouraging and delightful things. The Junker lady was very kind, and asked me to lunch with her, and I'm going tomorrow. The young man who played the accompaniment bowed, clicked his heels together, caught up my hand, and kissed it. He didn't say anything. Kloster says he is passionately devoted to music, and so good at it that he would easily have been a first-rate musician if he hadn't happened to have been born a Junker, and therefore has to be an officer. It's a tragedy, apparently, for Kloster says he hates soldiering, and is ill if he is kept away long from music. He went away soon after that.

Gräfin Köseritz brought me back in her car and dropped me at Frau Berg's on her way home. She lives in the Sommerstrasse, next to the Brandenburger Thor, so she isn't very far from me. She shuddered when she looked up at Frau Berg's house. It did look very dismal.

Bedtime.

I'm so sleepy, precious mother, *so* sleepy that I must go straight to bed. I can't hold my head up or my eyes open. I think it's the weather—it was very hot today. Good night and bless you, my sweetest mother.

Your own Chris who loves you.

go out and look for June in the woods. The woods were a little thin and austere, for there has been no rain lately, but how enchanting after the barren dustiness of my Berlin street! I did love it so. And I felt so free and glorious, coming off on my own for my hard-earned Sunday outing, just like any other young man.

The train going down was full of officers, and they all looked very smart and efficient and satisfied with themselves and life. In my compartment they were talking together eagerly all the way, talking shop with unaffected appetite, as though shop were so interesting that even on Sundays they couldn't let it be, and poring together over maps. No trace of stolidity. But where is this stolidity one has heard about? Compared to the Germans I've seen, it is we who are stolid; stolid, and slow, and bored. The last thing these people are is bored. On the contrary, the officers had that same excitement about them, that same strung-upness, that the men boarders at Frau Berg's have.

Potsdam is charming, and swarms with palaces and parks. If it hadn't been woods I was after I would have explored it with great interest. Do you remember when you read

Carlyle's Frederick to me that winter you were trying to persuade me to learn to sew? And, bribing me to sew, you read aloud? I didn't learn to sew, but I did learn a great deal about Potsdam and Hohenzollerns, and some Sunday when it isn't quite so fine I shall go down and visit Sans Souci, and creep back into the past again. But today I didn't want walls and roofs, I wanted just to walk and walk. It was very crowded in the train coming back, full of people who had been out for the day, and weary little children were crying, and we all sat heaped up anyhow. I know I clutched two babies on my lap, and that they showed every sign of having no self-control. They were very sweet, though, and I wouldn't have minded it a bit if I had had lots of skirts; but when you only have two!

Wanda was very kind, and brought me some secret coffee and bread and butter to my room when I told her I had walked at least ten miles and was too tired to go into supper. She cried out "*Herr Je!*"—which I'm afraid is short for Lord Jesus, and is an exclamation dear to her—and seized the coffee pot at once and started heating it up. I remembered afterwards that German miles are three times the size of English ones, so no wonder she said *Herr Je.* But

just think: I haven't seen a single boarder for a whole day. I do feel so much refreshed.

You know I told you in my last letter I was going to lunch with the Köseritzes on Monday, and so I did, and the chief thing that happened there was that I was shy. Imagine it. So shy that I blushed and dropped things. For years I haven't thought of what I looked like when I've been with other people, because for years other people have been so absorbingly interesting that I forgot I was there too; but at the Köseritzes I suddenly found myself remembering, greatly to my horror, that I have a face, and that it goes about with me wherever I go, and that parts of it are—well, I don't like them. And I remembered that my hair had been done in a hurry, and that the fingers of my left hand have four hard lumps on their tips where they press the strings of my fiddle, and that they're very ugly, but then one can't have things both ways, can one. Also I became aware of my clothes, and we know how fatal that is when they are weak clothes like mine, don't we, little mother? You used to exhort me to put them on with care and concentration, and then leave them to God. Such sound advice! And I've followed it so long that I do completely forget

them; but last Monday I didn't. They were urged on my notice by Gräfin Köseritz's daughter, whose eyes ran over me from head to foot and then back again when I came in. She was the neatest thing—*aus dem Ei gegossen,* as they express perfect correctness of appearance. I suddenly knew, what I have always suspected, that I was blowsy,—blowsy and loose-jointed, with legs that are too long and not the right sort of feet. I hated my *Beethovenkopf* and all its hair. I wanted to have less hair, and for it to be drawn neatly high off my face and brushed and waved in beautiful regular lines. And I wanted a spotless lacy blouse, and a string of pearls round my throat, and a perfectly made blue serge skirt without mud on it,—it was raining, and I had walked. Do you know what I felt like? A *goodnatured* thing. The sort of creature people say generously about afterwards, "Oh, but she's so goodnatured."

Gräfin Köseritz was terribly kind to me, and that made me shyer than ever, for I knew she was trying to put me at my ease, and you can imagine how shy *that* made me. I blushed and dropped things, and the more I blushed and dropped things the kinder she was. And all the time my contemporary, Helena, looked at

me with the same calm eyes. She has a completely emotionless face. I saw no trace of a passion for music or for anything else in it. She made no approaches of any sort to me, she just calmly looked at me. Her mother talked with the extreme vivacity of the hostess who has a difficult party on hand. There was a silent governess between two children, Junkerlets still in the school-room, who stared uninterruptedly at me and seemed unsuccessfully endeavouring to place me; there was a young lady cousin who talked during the whole meal in an undertone to Helena; and there was Graf Köseritz, an abstracted man who came in late, muttered something vague on being introduced to me and told I was a new genius Kloster had unearthed, sat down to his meal from which he did not look up again, and was monosyllabic when his wife tried to draw him in and make the conversation appear general. And all the time, while lending an ear to her cousin's murmur of talk, Helena's calm eyes lingered on one portion after the other of your poor vulnerable Chris.

Actually I found myself hoping hotly that I hadn't forgotten to wash my ears that morning in the *mêlée* of getting up. I have to wash myself in bits, one at a time, because at Frau

Berg's I'm only given a very small tin tub, the bath being used for keeping extra bedding in. It is difficult and distracting, and sometimes one forgets little things like ears, little extra things like that; and when Helena's calm eyes, which appeared to have no sort of flicker in them, or hesitation, or blink, settled on one of my ears and hung there motionless, I became so much unnerved that I upset the spoon out of the whipped-cream dish that was just being served to me, on to the floor. It was a parquet floor, and the spoon made such a noise, and the cream made such a mess. I was so wretched, because I had already upset a pepper thing earlier in the meal, and spilt some water. The white-gloved butler advanced in a sort of stately goose-step with another spoon, which he placed on the dish being handed to me, and a third menial of lesser splendour but also white-gloved brought a cloth and wiped up the mess, and the Gräfin became more terribly and volubly kind than ever. Helena's eyes never wavered. They were still on my ear. A little more and I would have reached that state the goaded shy get to when they suddenly in their agony say more striking things than the boldest would dream of saying, but Herr von Inster came in.

He is the young man I told you about who played my accompaniment the other night. We had got to the coffee, and the servants were gone, and the Graf had lit a cigar and was gazing in deep abstraction at the tablecloth while the Gräfin assured me of his keen interest in music and its interpretation by the young and promising, and Helena's eyes were resting on a spot there is on my only really nice blouse,—I can't think how it got there, mother darling, and I'm fearfully sorry, and I've tried to get it out with benzin and stuff, but it is better to wear a blouse with spots on it than not to wear a blouse at all, isn't it. I had pinned some flowers on it too, to hide it, and so they did at first, but they were fading and hanging down, and there was the spot, and Helena found it. Well, Herr von Inster came in, and put us all right. He looks like nothing but a smart young officer, very beautiful and slim in his Garde-Uhlan uniform, but he is really a lot of other things besides. He is the Köseritz's cousin, and Helena says *Du* to him. He was very polite, said the right things to everybody, explained he had had his luncheon, but thought, as he was passing, he would look in. He would not deny, he said, that he had heard I was coming—he made me a little bow across the table and smiled

—and that he had hopes I might perhaps be persuaded to play.

Not having a fiddle I couldn't do that. I wish I could have, for I'm instantly natural and happy when I get playing; but the Gräfin said she hoped I would play to some of her friends one evening as soon as she could arrange it,—friends interested in youthful geniuses, as she put it.

I said I would love to, and that it was so kind of her, but privately I thought I would inquire of Kloster first; for if her friends are all as deeply interested in music as the Graf and Helena, then I would be doing better and more profitably by going to bed at ten o'clock as usual, rather than emerge bedizened from my lair to go and flaunt in these haunts of splendid virtue.

After Herr von Inster came I began faintly to enjoy myself, for he talked all round, and greatly and obviously relieved his aunt by doing so. Helena let go of my ear and looked at him. Once she very nearly smiled. The other girl left off murmuring, and talked about things I could talk about too, such as England and Germany—they're never tired of that—and Strauss and Debussy. Only the Graf sat mute, his eyes fixed on the tablecloth.

"My husband is dying to hear you play," said the Gräfin, when he got up presently to go back to his work. "Absolutely *dying*," she said, recklessly padding out the leanness of his very bald good-bye to me.

He said nothing even to that. He just went. He didn't seem to be dying.

Herr von Inster walked back with me. He is very agreeable-looking, with kind eyes that are both shrewd and sad. He talks English very well, and so did everybody at the Köseritzes who talked at all. He is pathetically keen on music. Kloster says he would have been a really great player, but being a Junker settles him for ever. It is tragic to be forced out of one's natural bent, and he says he hates soldiering. People in the street were very polite, and made way for me because I was with an officer. I wasn't pushed off the pavement once.

Good night my own mother. I've had a happy week. I put my arms round you and kiss you with all that I have of love.

Your Chris.

Wanda came in in great excitement to fetch my tray just now, and said a prince has been assassinated. She heard the *Herrschaften* saying so at supper. She thought they said it

was an Austrian, but whatever prince it was it was *Majestätsbeleidigung* to get killing him, and she marvelled how any one had dared. Then Frau Berg herself came to tell me. By this time I was in bed,—pig-tailed, and ready to go to sleep. She was tremendously excited, and I felt a cold shiver down my back watching her. She was so much excited that I caught it from her and was excited too. Well, it *is* very dreadful the way these king-people get bombed out of life. She said it was the Austrian heir to the throne and his wife, both of them. But of course you'll know all about it by the time you get this. She didn't know any details, but there had been extra editions of the Sunday papers, and she said it would mean war.

"War?" I echoed.

"War," she repeated; and began to tread heavily about the room saying, "War. War."

"But who with?" I asked, watching her fascinated, sitting up in bed holding on to my knees.

"It will come," said Frau Berg, treading about like some huge Judaic prophetess who sniffs blood. "It must come. There will be no quiet in the world till blood has been let."

"But what blood?" I asked, rather tremu-

lously, for her voice and behaviour curdled me.

"The blood of all those evil-doers who are responsible," she said; and she paused a moment at the foot of my bed and folded her arms across her chest—they could hardly reach, and the word chest sounds much too flat—and added, "Of whom there are many."

Then she began to walk about again, and each time a foot went down the room shook. "All, all need punishing," she said as she walked. "There will be, there must be, punishment for this. Great and terrible. Blood will, blood must flow in streams before such a crime can be regarded as washed out. Such evil-doers must be emptied of all their blood."

And then luckily she went away, for I was beginning to freeze to the sheets with horror.

I got out of bed to write this. You'll be shocked too, I know. The way royalties are snuffed out one after the other! How glad I am I'm not one and you're not one, and we can live safely and fruitfully outside the range of bombs. Poor things. It is very horrible. Yet they never seem to abdicate or want *not* to be royalties, so that I suppose they think it worth it on the whole. But Frau Berg was terrible. What a bloodthirsty woman. I wonder if the other boarders will talk like that.

I do pray not, for I hate the very word blood. And why does she say there'll be war? They will catch the murderers and punish them as they've done before, and there'll be an end of it. There wasn't war when the Empress of Austria was killed, or the King and Queen of Servia. I think Frau Berg wanted to make me creep. She has a fixed idea that English people are every one of them much too comfortable, and should at all costs be made to know what being uncomfortable is like. For their good, I suppose.

Berlin, Tuesday, June 30th, 1914.

Darling mother,

How splendid that you're going to Switzerland next month with the Cunliffes. I do think it is glorious, and it will make you so strong for the winter. And think how much nearer you'll be to me! I always suspected Mrs. Cunliffe of being secretly an angel, and now I know it. Your letter has just come and I simply *had* to tell you how glad I am.

Chris.

This isn't a letter, it's a cry of joy.

Berlin, Sunday, July 5th, 1914.

My blessed little mother,

It has been so hot this week. We've been sweltering up here under the roof. If you are having it anything like this at Chertsey the sooner you persuade the Cunliffes to leave for Switzerland the better. Just the sight of snow on the mountains out of your window would keep you cool. You know I told you my bedroom looks onto the Lützowstrasse and the sun beats on it nearly all day, and flies in great numbers have taken to coming up here and listening to me play, and it is difficult to practise satisfactorily while they walk about enraptured on my neck. I can't swish them away, because both my hands are busy. I wish I had a tail.

Frau Berg says there never used to be flies in this room, and suggests with some sternness that I brought them with me,—the eggs, I suppose, in my luggage. She is inclined to deny that they're here at all, on the ground chiefly that nothing so irregular as a fly out of its proper place, which is, she says, a manure heap,

is possible in Germany. It is too well managed, is Germany, she says. I said I supposed she knew that because she had seen it in the newspapers. I was snappy, you see. The hot weather makes me disposed, I'm afraid, to impatience with Frau Berg. She is so large, and she seems to soak up what air there is, and whenever she has sat on a chair it keeps warm afterwards for hours. If only some clever American with inventions rioting in his brain would come here and adapt her to being an electric fan! I want one so badly, and she would be beautiful whirling round, and would make an immense volume of air, I'm sure.

Well, darling one, you see I'm peevish. It's because I'm so hot, and it doesn't get cool at night. And the food is so hot too and so greasy, and the pallid young man with the red mouth who sits opposite me at dinner melts visibly and continuously all the time, and Wanda coming round with the dishes is like the coming of a blast of hot air. Kloster says I'm working too much, and wants me to practise less. I said I didn't see that practising less would make Wanda and the young man cooler. I did try it one day when my head ached, and you've no idea what a long day it seemed. So empty. Nothing to do. Only

Berlin. And one feels more alone in Berlin than anywhere in the world, I think. Kloster says it's because I'm working too much, but I don't see how working less would make Berlin more companionable. Of course I'm not a bit alone really, for there is Kloster, who takes a very real and lively interest in me and is the most delightful of men, and there is Herr von Inster, who has been twice to see me since that day I lunched at his aunt's, and everybody in this house talks to me now,—more to me, I think, than to any other of the boarders, because I'm English and they seem to want to educate me out of it. And Hilda Seeberg has actually got as far in friendship as a cautious invitation to have chocolate with her one afternoon some day in the future at Wertheim's; and the pallid young man has suggested showing me the Hohenzollern museum some Sunday, where he can explain to me, by means of relics, the glorious history of that high family, as he put it; and Frau Berg, though she looks like some massive Satan, isn't really satanic I expect; and Dr. Krummlaut says every day as he comes into the diningroom rubbing his hands and passes my chair, *"Na, was macht England?"* which is a sign he is being gracious. It is only a feeling, this of being

completely alone. But I've got it, and the longer I'm here and the better I know people the greater it becomes. It's an *uneasiness.* I feel as if my *spirit* were alone,—the real, ultimate and only bit of me that is me and that matters.

If I go on like this you too, my little mother, will begin echoing Kloster and tell me that I'm working too much. Dear England. Dear, dear England. To find out how much one loves England all one has to do is to come to Germany.

Of course they talk of nothing else at every meal here now but the Archduke's murder. It's the impudence of the Servians that chiefly makes them gasp. That they should dare! Dr. Krummlaut says they never would have dared if they hadn't been instigated to this deed of atrocious blasphemy by Russia,—Russia bursting with envy of the Germanic powers and encouraging every affront to them. The whole table, except the Swede who eats steadily on, sees red at the word affront. Frau Berg reiterates that the world needs blood-letting before there can be any real calm again, but it isn't German blood she wants to let. Germany is surrounded by enormously wicked people, I gather, all swollen with envy, hatred and mal-

ice, and all of gigantic size. In the middle of these monsters browses Germany, very white and woolly-haired and loveable, a little lamb among the nations, artlessly only wanting to love and be loved, weak physically compared to its towering neighbours, but strong in simplicity and the knowledge of its *gute Recht.* And when they say these things they all turn to me for endorsement and approval—they've given up seeking response from the Swede, because she only eats—and I hastily run over my best words and pick out the most suitable one, which is generally *herrlich,* or else *ich gratuliere.* The gigantic, the really cosmic cynicism I fling into it glances off their comfortable thick skins unnoticed.

I think Kloster is right, and they haven't grown up yet. People like the Köseritzes, people of the world, don't show how young they are in the way these middle-class Germans do, but I daresay they are just the same really. They have the greediness of children too,—I don't mean in things to eat, though they have that too, and take the violent interest of ten years old in what there'll be for dinner—I mean greed for other people's possessions. In all their talk, all their expoundings of *deutsche Idealen,* I have found no trace of consideration

for others, or even of any sort of recognition that other nations too may have rights and virtues. I asked Kloster whether I hadn't chanced on a little group of people who were exceptions in their way of looking at life, and he said No, they were perfectly typical of the Prussians, and that the other classes, upper and lower, thought in the same way, the difference lying only in their manner of expressing it.

"All these people, Mees Chrees," he said, "have been drilled. Do not forget that great fact. Every man of every class has spent some of the most impressionable years of his life being drilled. He never gets over it. Before that, he has had the nursery and the schoolroom: drill, and very thorough drill, in another form. He is drilled into what the authorities find it most convenient that he should think from the moment he can understand words. By the time he comes to his military service his mind is already squeezed into the desired shape. Then comes the finishing off,—the body drilled to match the mind, and you have the perfect slave. And it is because he is a slave that when he has power—and every man has power over some one—he is so great a bully."

"But you must have been drilled too," I said, "and you're none of these things."

He looked at me in silence for a moment, with his funny protruding eyes. Then he said, "I am told, and I believe it, that no man ever really gets over having been imprisoned."

Evening.

I feel greatly refreshed, for what do you think I've been doing since I left off writing this morning? Motoring out into the country, —the sweet and blessed country, the home of God's elect, as the hymn says, only the hymn meant Jerusalem, and the golden kind of Jerusalem, which can't be half as beautiful as just plain grass and daisies. Herr von Inster appeared up here about twelve. Wanda came to my door and banged on it with what sounded like a saucepan, and I daresay was, for she wouldn't waste time leaving off stirring the pudding while she went to open the front door, and she called out very loud, *"Der Herr Offizier ist schon wieder da."*

All the flat must have heard her, and so did Herr von Inster.

"Here I am, *schon wieder da,"* he said, clicking his heels together when I came into the din-

ingroom where he was waiting among the *débris* of the first spasms of Wanda's table-laying; and we both laughed.

He said the Master—so he always speaks of Kloster, and with such affection and admiration in his voice—and his wife were downstairs in his car, and wanted him to ask me to join them so that he might drive us all into the country on such a fine day.

You can imagine how quickly I put on my hat.

"It is doing you good already," he said, looking at me as we went down the four flights of stairs,—so Kloster had been telling him, too, that story about too much work.

Herr von Inster drove, and we three sat on the back seat, because he had his soldier chauffeur with him, so I didn't get as much talk with him as I had hoped, for I like him *very* much, and so would you, little mother. There is nothing of the aggressive swashbuckler about him. I'm sure he doesn't push a woman off the pavement when there isn't room for him.

I don't think I've told you about Frau Kloster, but that is because one keeps on forgetting she is there. Perhaps that quality of beneficent invisibleness is what an artist most needs in a wife. She never says anything, except things

that require no answering. It's a great virtue, I should think, in a wife. From time to time, when Kloster has *lèse majestäted* a little too much, she murmurs *Aber* Adolf; or she announces placidly that she has just killed a mosquito; or that the sky is blue; and Kloster's talk goes on on the top of this little undercurrent without taking the least notice of it. They seem very happy. She tends him as carefully as one would tend a baby,—one of those quite new pink ones that can't stand anything hardly without crumpling up,—and competently clears life round him all empty and free, so that he has room to work. I wish I had a wife.

We drove out through Potsdam in the direction of Brandenburg, and lunched in the woods at Potsdam by the lake the Marmor Palais is on. Kloster stared at this across the water while he ate, and the sight of it tinged his speech regrettably. Herr von Inster, as an officer of the King, ought really to have smitten him with the flat side of his sword, but he didn't; he listened and smiled. Perhaps he felt as the really religious do about God, that the Hohenzollerns are so high up that criticism can't harm them, but I doubt it; or perhaps he regards Kloster indulgently, as a gifted and

wayward child, but I doubt that too. He happens to be intelligent, and is not to be persuaded that a spade is anything but a spade, however much it may be got up to look like the Ark of the Covenant or anything else archaic and bedizened—God forbid, little mother, that you should suppose I meant that dreadful pun.

Frau Kloster had brought food with her, part of which was cherries, and they slid down one's hot dry throat like so many cool little blessings. I could hardly believe that I had really escaped the Sunday dinner at the pension. We were very content, all of us I think, sitting on the grass by the water's edge, a tiny wind stirring our hair—except Kloster's, because he so happily hasn't got any, which must be delicious in hot weather,—and rippling along the rushes.

"She grows less pale every hour," Kloster said to Herr von Inster, fixing his round eyes on me.

Herr von Inster looked at me with his grave shrewd ones, and said nothing.

"We brought out a windflower," said Kloster, "and behold we will return with a rose. At present, Mees Chrees, you are a cross be-

tween the two. You have ceased to be a windflower, and are not yet a rose. I wager that by five o'clock the rose period will have set in."

They were both so kind to me all day, you can't think little mother, and so was Frau Kloster, only one keeps on forgetting her. Herr von Inster didn't talk much, but he looked quite as content as the rest of us. It is strange to remember that only this morning I was writing about feeling so lonely and by myself in spirit. And so I was; and so I have been all this week. But I don't feel like that now. You see how the company of one righteous man, far more than his prayers, availeth much. And the company of two of them availeth exactly double. Kloster is certainly a righteous man, which I take it means a man who is both intelligent and good, and so I am sure is Herr von Inster. If he were not, he, a Junker and an officer, would think being with people so outside his world as the Klosters intolerable. But of course then he wouldn't be with them. It wouldn't interest him. It is so funny to watch his set, regular, wooden profile, and then when he turns and looks at one to see his eyes. The difference just eyes can make! His face is the face of the drilled, of the perfect unthinking machine, the correct and well-born Oberleut-

nant; and out of it look the eyes of a human being who knows, or will know I'm certain before life has done with him, what exultations are, and agonies, and love, and man's unconquerable mind. He really is very nice. I'm sure you'd like him.

After lunch, and after Kloster had said some more regrettable things, being much moved, it appeared, by the palace facing him and by some personal recollections he had of the particular Hohenzollern it contained, while I lay looking up along the smooth beech-trunks to their bright leaves glancing against the wonderful blue of the sky—oh it *was* so lovely, little mother!—and Frau Kloster sometimes said *Aber* Adolf, and occasionally announced that she had slain another mosquito, we motored on towards Brandenburg, along the chain of lakes formed by the Havel. It was like heaven after the Lützowstrasse. And at four o'clock we stopped at a Gasthaus in the pinewoods and had coffee and wild strawberries, and Herr von Inster paddled me out on the Havel in an old punt we found moored among the rushes.

It looked so queer to see an officer in full Sunday splendour punting, but there are a few things which seem to us ridiculous that Germans do with great simplicity. It was rather

like being punted on the Thames by somebody in a top hat and a black coat. He looked like a bright dragon-fly in his lean elegance, balancing on the rotten little board across the end of the punt; or like Siegfried, made up to date, on his journey down the Rhine,—made very much up to date, his gorgeous barbaric boat and fine swaggering body that ate half a sheep at a sitting and made large love to lusty goddesses wittled away by the centuries to this old punt being paddled about slowly by a lean man with thoughtful eyes.

I told him he was like Siegfried in the second act of the Götterdämmerung, but worn a little thin by the passage of the ages, and he laughed and said that he at least had got Brunnhilde safe in the boat with him, and wasn't going to have to climb through fire to fetch her. He says he thinks Wagner's music and Strauss's intimately characteristic of modern Germany: the noise, the sugary sentimentality making the public weep tears of melted sugar, he said, the brutal glorification of force, the all-conquering swagger, the exaggeration of emotions, the big gloom. They were the natural expression, he said, of the phase Germany was passing through, and Strauss is its latest flowering,—even noisier, even more bloody, of a bigger

gloom. In that immense noise, he said, was all Germany as it is now, as it will go on being till it wakes up from the nightmare dream of conquest that has possessed it ever since the present emperor came to the throne.

"I'm sure you're saying things you oughtn't to," I said.

"Of course," he said. "One always is in Germany. Everything being forbidden, there is nothing left but to sin. I have yet to learn that a multiplicity of laws makes people behave. Behave, I mean, in the way Authority wishes."

"But Kloster says you're a nation of slaves, and that the drilling you get *does* make you behave in the way Authority wishes."

He said it was true they were slaves, but that slaves were of two kinds,—the completely cowed, who gave no further trouble, and the furtive evaders, who consoled themselves for their outward conformity to regulations by every sort of forbidden indulgence in thought and speech. "This is the kind that only waits for an opportunity to flare out and free itself," he said. "Mind, thinking, can't be chained up. Authority knows this, and of all things in the world fears thought."

He talked about the Serajevo assassinations,

and said he was afraid they would not be settled very easily. He said Germany is seething,—*seething,* he said emphatically, with desire to fight; that it is almost impossible to have a great army at such a pitch of perfection as the German army is now and not use it; that if a thing like that isn't used it will fester inwardly and set up endless internal mischief and become a danger to the very Crown that created it. To have it hanging about idle in this ripe state, he said, is like keeping an unexercised young horse tied up in the stable on full feed; it would soon kick the stable to pieces, wouldn't it, he said.

"I hate armies," I said. "I hate soldiering, and all it stands for of aggression, and cruelty, and crime on so big a scale that it's unpunishable."

"Great God, and don't I!" he exclaimed, with infinite fervour.

He told me something that greatly horrified me. He says that children kill themselves in Germany. They commit suicide, school-children and even younger ones, in great numbers every year. He says they're driven to it by the sheer cruelty of the way they are overworked and made to feel that if they are not moved up in the school at the set time they and

their parents are for ever disgraced and their whole career blasted. Imagine the misery a wretched child must suffer before it reaches the stage of *preferring* to kill itself! No other nation has this blot on it.

"Yes," he said, nodding in agreement with the expression on my face, "yes, we are mad. It is in this reign that we've gone mad, mad with the obsession to get at all costs and by any means to the top of the world. We must outstrip; outstrip at whatever cost of happiness and life. We must be better trained, more efficient, quicker at grabbing than other nations, and it is the children who must do it for us. Our future rests on their brains. And if they fail, if they can't stand the strain, we break them. They're of no future use. Let them go. Who cares if they kill themselves? So many fewer inefficients, that's all. The State considers that they are better dead."

And all the while, while he was telling me these things, on the shore lay Kloster and his wife, neatly spread out side by side beneath a tree asleep with their handkerchiefs over their faces. That's the idea we've got in England of Germany,—multitudes of comfortable couples, kindly and sleepy, snoozing away the afternoon hours in gardens or pine forests.

That's the idea the Government wants to keep before Europe, Herr von Inster says, this idea of benevolent, beery harmlessness. It doesn't want other nations to know about the children, the dead, flung aside children, the ruthless breaking up of any material that will not help in the driving of their great machine of destruction, because then the other nations would know, he says, before Germany is ready for it to be known, that she will stick at nothing.

Wanda has just taken away my lamp. Good night my own sweet mother.

Your Chris.

Berlin, Wednesday, July 8th, 1914.

Beloved mother,

Kloster says I'm to go into the country this very week and not come back for a whole fortnight. This is just a line to tell you this, and that he has written to a forester's family he knows living in the depths of the forests up beyond Stettin. They take in summer-boarders, and have had pupils of his before, and he is arranging with them for me to go there this very next Saturday.

Do you mind, darling mother? I mean, my doing something so suddenly without asking you first? But I'm like the tail being wagged by the dog, obliged to wag whether it wants to or not. I'm very unhappy at being shovelled off like this, away from my lessons for two solid weeks, but it's no use my protesting. One can't protest with Kloster. He says he won't teach me any more if I don't go. He was quite angry at last when I begged, and said it wouldn't be worth his while to go on teaching any one so stale with over-practising when they weren't fit to practise, and that if I didn't

stop, all I'd ever be able to do would be to play in the second row of violins—(not even the first!)—at a pantomime. That shrivelled me up into silence. Horror-stricken silence. Then he got kind again, and said I had this precious gift—God, he said, alone knew why *I* had got it, I a woman; what, he asked, staring prawnishly, is the good of a woman's having such a stroke of luck?—and that it was a great responsibility, and I wasn't to suppose it was my gift only, to spoil and mess up as I chose, but that it belonged to the world. When he said that, cold shivers trickled down my spine. He looked so solemn, and he made me feel so solemn, as though I were being turned, like Wordsworth in The Prelude, into a dedicated spirit.

But I expect he is right, and it is time I went where it is cooler for a little while. I've been getting steadily angrier at nothing all the week, and more and more fretted by the flies, and one day—would you believe it—I actually sat down and cried with irritation because of those silly flies. I've had to promise not to touch a fiddle for the first week I'm away, and during the second week not to work more than two hours a day, and then I may come back if I feel quite well again. He says he'll be at

Heringsdorf, which is a seaside place not very far away from where I shall be, for ten days himself, and will come over and see if I'm being good. He says the Köseritz's country place isn't far from where I shall be, so I shan't feel as if I didn't know a soul anywhere. The Köseritz party at which I was to play never came off. I was glad of that. I didn't a bit want to play at it, or bother about it, or anything else. The hot weather drove the Gräfin into the country, Herr von Inster told me. He too seems to think I ought to go away. I saw him this afternoon after being with Kloster, and he says he'll go down to his aunt's—that is Gräfin Köseritz—while I'm in the neighbourhood, and will ride over and see me. I'm sure you'd like him very much. My address will be:

bei Herrn Oberförster Bornsted
Schuppenfelde
Reg. Bez. Stettin.

I don't know what Reg. Bez. means. I've copied it from a card Kloster gave me, and I expect you had better put it on the envelope. I'll write and tell you directly I get there. Don't worry about me, little mother; Kloster says they are fearfully kind people, and it's the

healthiest place, in the heart of the forest, away on the edge of a thing they call the Haff, which is water. He says that in a week I shall be leaping about like a young roe on the hill side; and he tries to lash me to enthusiasm by talking of all the wild strawberries there are there, and all the cream.

My heart's love, darling mother.

Your confused and rather hustled Chris.

Oberförsterei, Schuppenfelde,
July 11th, 1914.

My own little mother,

Here I am, and it is lovely. I must just tell you about it before I go to bed. We're buried in forest, eight miles from the nearest station, and that's only a Kleinbahn station, a toy thing into which a small train crawls twice a day, having been getting to it for more than three hours from Stettin. The Oberförster met me in a high yellow carriage, drawn by two long-tailed horses who hadn't been worried with much drill judging from their individualistic behaviour, and we lurched over forest tracks that were sometimes deep sand and sometimes all roots, and the evening air was so delicious after the train, so full of different scents and freshness, that I did nothing but lift up my nose and sniff with joy.

The Oberförster thought I had a cold, without at the same time having a handkerchief; and presently, after a period of uneasiness on my behalf, offered me his. "It is not quite clean," he said, "but it is better than none."

And he shouted, because I was a foreigner and therefore would understand better if he shouted.

I explained as well as I could, which was not very, that my sniffs were sniffs of exultation.

"*Ach so,*" he said, indulgent with the indulgence one feels towards a newly arrived guest, before one knows what they are really like.

We drove on in silence after that. Our wheels made hardly any noise on the sandy track, and I suddenly discovered how long it is since I've heard any birds. I wish you had come with me here, little mother; I wish you had been on that drive this evening. There were jays, and magpies, and woodpeckers, and little tiny birds like finches that kept on repeating in a monotonous sweet pipe the opening bar of the Beethoven C minor Symphony No. 5. We met nobody the whole way except a man with a cartload of wood, who greeted the Oberförster with immense respect, and some dilapidated little children picking wild strawberries. I wanted to remark on their dilapidation, which seemed very irregular in this well-conducted country, but thought I had best leave reasoned conversation alone till I've

had time to learn more German, which I'm going to do diligently here, and till the Oberförster has discovered he needn't shout in order to make me understand. Sitting so close to my ear, when he shouted into it it was exactly as though some one had hit me, and hurt just as much.

He is a huge rawboned man, with the flat-backed head and protruding ears so many Germans have. What is it that is left out of their heads, I wonder? His moustache is like the Kaiser's, and he looks rather a fine figure of a man in his grey-green forester's uniform and becoming slouch hat with a feather stuck in it. Without his hat he is less impressive, because of his head. I suppose he has to have a head, but if he didn't have to he'd be very good-looking.

This *is* such a sweet place, little mother. I've got the dearest little clean bare bedroom, so attractive after the grim splendours of my drawingroom-bedroom at Frau Berg's. You can't think how lovely it is being here after the long hot journey. It's no fun travelling alone in Germany if you're a woman. I was elbowed about and pushed out of the way at stations by any men and boys there were as if I had been an ownerless trunk. Either that,

or they stared incredibly, and said things. One little boy—he couldn't have been more than ten—winked at me and whispered something about kissing. The station at Stettin was horrible, much worse than the Berlin one. I don't know where they all came from, the crowds of hooligan boys, just below military age, and extraordinarily disreputable and insolent. To add to the confusion on the platform there were hundreds of Russians and Poles with their families and bundles—I asked my porter who they were, and he told me—being taken from one place where they had been working in the fields to another place, shepherded by a German overseer with a fierce dog and a revolver; very poor and ragged, all of them, but gentle, and, compared to the Germans, of beautiful manners; and there were a good many officers —it was altogether the most excited station I've seen, I think—and they stared too, but I'm certain that if I had been in a difficulty and wanted help they would have walked away. Kloster told me Germans divide women into two classes: those they want to kiss, and those they want to kick, who are all those they don't want to kiss. One can be kissed and kicked in lots of ways besides actually, I think, and I felt as if I had been both on that dreadful plat-

form at Stettin. So you can imagine how heavenly it was to get into this beautiful forest, away from all that, into the quiet, the *holiness*. Frau Bornsted, who learned English at school, told me all the farms, including hers, are worked by Russians and Poles who are fetched over every spring in thousands by German overseers. "It is a good arrangement," she said. "In case of war we would not permit their departure, and so would our fields continue to be tilled." In case of war! Always that word on their tongues. Even in this distant corner of peace.

The Oberförsterei is a low white house with a clearing round it in which potatoes have been planted, and a meadow at the back going down to a stream, and a garden in front behind a low paling, full of pinks and larkspurs and pansies. A pair of antlers is nailed over the door, proud relic of an enormous stag the Oberförster shot on an unusually lucky day, and Frau Bornsted was sewing in the porch beneath honeysuckle when we arrived. It was just like the Germany one had in one's story books in the schoolroom days. It seemed too good to be true after the Lützowstrasse. Frau Bornsted is quite a pretty young woman, flat rather than slender, tall, with lovely deep blue

eyes and long black eyelashes. She would be very pretty if it occurred to her that she *is* pretty, but evidently it doesn't, or else it isn't proper to be pretty here; I think this is the real explanation of the way her hair is scraped back into a little hard knob, and her face shows signs of being scrubbed every day with the same soap and the same energy she uses for the kitchen table. She has no children, and isn't, I suppose, more than twenty five, but she looks as thirty five, or even forty, looks in England.

I love it all. It is really just like a story book. We had supper out in the porch, prepared, spread, and fetched by Frau Bornsted, and it was a milk soup—very nice and funny, and I lapped it up like a thirsty kitten—and cold meat, and fried potatoes, and curds and whey, and wild strawberries and cream. They have an active cow who does all the curds and whey and cream and butter and milk-soup, besides keeping on having calves without a murmur,—"She is an example," said Frau Bornsted, who wants to talk English all the time, which will play havoc, I'm afraid, with my wanting to talk German.

She took me to a window and showed me the cow, pasturing, like David, beside still waters. "And without rebellious thoughts unsuited to

her sex," said Frau Bornsted, turning and looking at me. She showed what she was thinking of by adding, "I hope you are not a suffragette?"

The Oberförster put on a thin green linen coat for supper, which he left unbuttoned to mark that he was off duty, and we sat round the table till it was starlight. Owls hooted in the forest across the road, and bats darted about our heads. Also there were mosquitoes. A great *many* mosquitoes. Herr Bornsted told me I wouldn't mind them after a while. *"Herrlich,"* I said, with real enthusiasm.

And now I'm going to bed. Kloster was right to send me here. I've been leaning out of my window. The night tonight is the most beautiful thing, a great dark cave of softness. I'm at the back of the house where the meadow is and the good cow, and beyond the meadow there's another belt of forest, and then just over the tops of the pines, which are a little more softly dark than the rest of the soft darkness, there's a pale line of light that is the starlit water of the Haff. Frogs are croaking down by the stream, every now and then an owl hoots somewhere in the distance, and the air comes up to my face off the long grass cool and damp. I can't tell you the effect the

blessed silence, the blessed peace has on me after the fret of Berlin. It feels like getting back to God. It feels like being home again in heaven after having been obliged to spend six weeks in hell. And yet here, even here in the very lap of peace, as we sat in the porch after supper the Oberförster talked ceaselessly of *Weltpolitik*. The very sound of that word now makes me wince; for translated into plain English, what it means when you've pulled all the trimmings off and look at it squarely, is just taking other people's belongings, beginning with their blood. I must learn enough German to suggest that to the Oberförster: Murder, as a preliminary to Theft. I'm afraid he would send me straight back in disgrace to Frau Berg.

Good night darling mother. I'll write oftener now. My rules don't count this fortnight. Bless you, beloved little mother.

Your Chris.

Schuppenfelde, Monday, July 13th.

Sweet mother,

I got your letter from Switzerland forwarded on this morning, and like to feel you're by so much nearer me than you were a week ago. At least, I try to persuade myself that it's a thing to like, but I know in my heart it makes no earthly difference. If you're only a mile away and I mayn't see you, what's the good? You might as well be a thousand. The one thing that will get me to you again is accomplished work. I want to work, to be quick; and here I am idle, precious days passing, each of which not used for working means one day longer away from you. And I'm so well. There's no earthly reason why I shouldn't start practising again this very minute. A day yesterday in the forest has cured me completely. By the time I've lived through my week of promised idleness I shall be kicking my loose box to pieces! And then for another whole week there'll only be two hours of my violin allowed. Why, I shall fall

on those miserable two hours like a famished beggar on a crust.

Well, I'm not going to grumble. It's only that I love you so, and miss you so very much. You know how I always missed you on Sunday in Berlin, because then I had time to feel, to remember; and here it is all Sundays. I've had two of them already, yesterday and today, and I don't know what it will be like by the time I've had the rest. I walked miles yesterday, and the more beautiful it was the more I missed you. What's the good of having all this loveliness by oneself? I want somebody with me to see it and feel it too. If you were here how happy we should be!

I wish you knew Herr von Inster, for I know you'd like him. I do think he's unusual, and you like unusual people. I had a letter from him today, sent with a book he thought I'd like, but I've read it,—it is Selma Lägerlöf's Jerusalem; do you remember our reading it together that Easter in Cornwall? But wasn't it very charming of him to send it? He says he is coming this way the end of the week and will call on me and renew his acquaintance with the Oberförster, with whom he says he has gone shooting sometimes when he has been staying at Köseritz. His Christian

name is Bernd. Doesn't it sound nice and *honest.*

I suppose by the end of the week he means Saturday, which is a very long way off. Saturdays used to seem to come rushing on to the very heels of Mondays in Berlin when I was busy working. Little mother, you can take it from me, from your wise, smug daughter, that work is the key to every happiness. Without it happiness won't come unlocked. What do people do who don't do anything, I wonder?

Köseritz is only five miles away, and as he'll stay there, I suppose, with his relations, he won't have very far to come. He'll ride over, I expect. He looks so nice on a horse. I saw him once in the Thiergarten, riding. I'd love to ride on these forest roads,—the sandy ones are perfect for riding; but when I asked the Oberförster today, after I got Herr von Inster's letter, whether he could lend me a horse while I was here, what do you think I found out? That Kloster, suspecting I might want to ride, had written him instructions on no account to allow me to. Because I might tumble off, if you please, and sprain either of my precious wrists. Did you ever. I believe Kloster regards me only as a vessel for carrying about

music to other people, not as a human being at all. It is like the way jockeys are kept, strict and watched, before a race.

Frau Bornsted gazed at me with her large serious eyes, and said, "Do you play the violin, then, *so* well?"

"No," I snapped. "I don't." And I drummed with my fingers on the windowpane and felt as rebellious as six years old.

But of course I'm going to be good. I won't do anything that may delay my getting home to you.

The Bornsteds say Köseritz is a very beautiful place, on the very edge of the Haff. They talk with deep respectfulness of the Herr Graf, and the Frau Gräfin, and the *junge* Komtesse. It's wonderful how respectful Germans are towards those definitely above them. And so uncritical. Kloster says that it is drill does it. You never get over the awe, he says, for the sergeant, for the lieutenant, for whoever, as you rise a step, is one step higher. I told the Bornsteds I had met the Köseritzes in Berlin, and they looked at me with a new interest, and Frau Bornsted, who has been very prettily taking me in hand and endeavouring to root out the opinions she takes for granted that I hold, being an *Engländerin,*

came down for a while more nearly to my level, and after having by questioning learned that I had lunched with the Köseritzes, and having endeavoured to extract, also by questioning, what we had had to eat, which I couldn't remember except the whipped cream I spilt on the floor, she remarked, slowly nodding her head, "It must have been very agreeable for you to be with the *gräfliche Familie.*"

"And for them to be with me," I said, moved to forwardness by being full of forest air, which goes to my head.

I suppose this was what they call disrespectful without being funny, for Frau Bornsted looked at me in silence, and Herr Bornsted, who doesn't understand English, asked in German, seeing his wife solemn, "What does she say?" And when she told him he said, *"Ach,"* and showed his disapproval by absorbing himself in the *Deutsche Tageszeitung.*

It's wonderful how easy it is to be disrespectful in Germany. You've only got to be the least bit cheerful and let some of it out, and you've done it.

"Why are the English always so like that?" Frau Bornsted asked presently, after having marked her regret at my behaviour by not saying anything for five minutes.

"Like what?"

"So—so without reverence. And yet you are a religious people. You send out missionaries."

"Yes, and support bishops," I said. "*You* haven't got any bishops."

"You are the first nation in the world as regards missionaries," she said, gazing at me thoughtfully and taking no notice of the bishops. "My father"—her father is a pastor—"has a great admiration for your missionaries. How is it you have so many missionaries and at the same time so little reverence?"

"Perhaps that *is* why," I said; and started off explaining, while she looked at me with beautiful uncomprehending eyes, that the reaction from the missionaries and from the kind of spirit that prompts their raising and export might conceivably produce a desire to be irreverent and laugh, and that life more and more seemed to me like a pendulum, and that it needs must swing both ways.

Frau Bornsted sat twisting her wedding ring on her finger till I was quiet again. She does this whenever I emit anything that can be called an idea. It reminds her that she is married, and that I, as she says, am *nur ein*

junges Mädchen, and therefore not to be taken seriously.

When I had finished about the pendulum, she said, "All this will be cured when you have a husband."

There was a tea party here yesterday afternoon. At least, it was coffee. I thought there were no neighbours, and when I came back late from having been all day in the forest, missing with an indifference that amazed Frau Bornsted the lure of her Sunday dinner, and taking some plum-cake and two Bibles with me, English and German, because I'm going to learn German that way among other ways while I'm here, and I think it's a very good way, and it immensely impressed Frau Bornsted to see me take two Bibles out for a walk,—when I got back about five, untidy and hot and able to say off a whole psalm in perfect Lutheran German, I found several high yellow carriages, like the one I was fetched in on Saturday, in front of the paling, with nosebags and rugs on the horses, and indoors in the parlour a number of other foresters and their wives, besides Frau Bornsted's father and mother and younger sister, and the local doctor and his wife, and the Herr Lehrer, a tall young man

in spectacles who teaches in the village school two miles away.

I was astonished, for I imagined complete isolation here. Frau Bornsted says, though, that this only happens on Sundays. They were sitting round the remnants of coffee and cake, the men smoking and talking together apart from the women, the women with their bonnet-strings untied and hanging over their bosoms, of which there seemed to be many and much, telling each other, while they fanned themselves with immense handkerchiefs, what they had had for their Sunday dinner.

I would have slunk away when I heard the noise of voices, and gone round to the peaceful company of the cow, but Frau Bornsted saw me coming up the path and called me in.

I went in reluctantly, and on my appearing there was a dead silence, which would have unnerved me if I hadn't still had my eyes so full of sunlight that I hardly saw anything in the dark room, and stood there blinking.

Unsere junge Engländerin," said Frau Bornsted, presenting me. *"Schühlerin von* Kloster—*grosses Talent,—"* I heard her adding, handing round the bits of information as though it was cake.

They all said *Ach so,* and *Wirklich,* and somebody asked if I liked Germany, and I said, still not seeing much, *"Es ist wundervoll,"* which provoked a murmur of applause, as the newspapers say.

I found I was expected to sit in a corner with Frau Bornsted's sister, who with the Lehrer and myself, being all of us unmarried, represented what the others spoke of as *die Jugend,* and that I was to answer sweetly and modestly any question I was asked by the others, but not to ask any myself, or indeed not to speak at all unless in the form of answering. I gathered this from the behaviour of Frau Bornsted's sister; but I do find it very hard not to be natural, and it's natural to me, as you know to your cost, don't you, little mother, to ask what things mean and why.

There was a great silence while I was given a cup of coffee and some cake by Frau Bornsted, helped by her sister. The young man, the third in our trio of youth, sat motionless in the chair next to me while this was done. I wanted to fetch my cup myself, rather than let Frau Bornsted wait on me, but she pressed me down into my chair again with firmness and the pained look of one who is witnessing the committing of a solecism. *"Bitte*—take

place again," she said, her English giving way in the stress of getting me to behave as I should.

The women looked on with open interest and curiosity, examining my clothes and hair and hands and the Bibles I was clutching and the flowers I had stuck in where the Psalms are, because I never can find the Psalms right off. The men looked too, but with caution. I was fearfully untidy. You would have been shocked. But I don't know how one is to lie about on moss all day and stay neat, and nobody told me I was going to tumble into the middle of a party.

The first to disentangle himself from the rest and come and speak to me was Frau Bornsted's father, Pastor Wienicke. He came and stood in front of me, his legs apart and a cigar in his mouth, and he took the cigar out to tell me, what I already knew, that I was English. *"Sie sind englisch,"* said Herr Pastor Wienicke.

"Ja," said I, as modestly as I could, which wasn't very.

There was something about the party that made me sit up on the edge of my chair with my feet neatly side by side, and hold my cup as carefully as if I had been at a school treat

and expecting the rector every minute. "England," said the pastor, while everybody else listened,—he spoke in German—"is, I think I may say, still a great country."

"*Ja?*" said I politely, tilting up the *ja* a little at its end, which was meant to suggest not only a deferential, "If you say so it must be so" attitude, but also a courteous doubt as to whether any country could properly be called great in a world in which the standard of greatness was set by so splendid an example of it as his own country.

And it did suggest this, for he said, "*Oh doch,*" balancing himself on his heels and toes alternately, as though balancing himself into exact justice. "*Oh doch.* I think one may honestly say she still is a great country. But—" and he raised his voice and his forefinger at me,—"let her beware of her money bags. That is my word to England: Beware of thy money bags."

There was a sound of approval in the room, and they all nodded their heads.

He looked at me, and as I supposed he might be expecting an answer I thought I had better say *ja* again, so I did.

"England," he then continued, "is our cousin, our blood-relation. Therefore is it

that we can and must tell her the truth, even if it is unpalatable."

"*Ja,*" I said, as he paused again; only there were several little things I would have liked to have said about that, if I had been able to talk German properly. But I had nothing but my list of exclamations and the psalms I had learnt ready. So I said *Ja,* and tried to look modest and intelligent.

"Her love of money, her materialism—these are her great dangers," he said. "I do not like to contemplate, and I ask my friends here—" he turned slowly round on his heels and back again—"whether they would like to contemplate a day when the sun of the British Empire, that Empire which, after all, has upheld the cause of religion with faithfulness and persistence for so long, shall be seen at last descending, to rise no more, in an engulfing ocean of over-indulged appetites."

"*Ja,*" I said; and then perceiving it was the wrong word, hastily amended in English, "I mean *nein.*"

He looked at me for a moment more carefully. Then deciding that all was well he went on.

"England," he said, "is our natural ally. She is of the same blood, the same faith, and

the same colour. Behold the other races of the world, and they are either partly, chiefly, or altogether black. The blonde races are, like the dawn, destined to drive away the darkness. They must stand together shoulder to shoulder in any discord that may, in the future, gash the harmony of the world."

"*Ja,*" I said, as one who should, at the conclusion of a Psalm, be saying Selah.

"We live in serious times," he said. "They may easily become more serious. Round us stand the Latins and the Slavs, armed to the teeth, bursting with envy of our goods, of our proud calm, and watching for the moment when they can fall upon us with criminal and murderous intent. Is it not so, my Fräulein?"

"*Ja,*" said I, forced to agree because of my unfortunate emptiness of German.

The only thing I could have reeled off at him was the Psalm I had learnt, and I did long to, because it was the one asking why the heathen so furiously rage together; but you see, little mother, though I longed to I couldn't have followed it up, and having fired it off I'd have sat there defenceless while he annihilated me.

But I don't know what they all mean by this constant talk of envious nations crouching

ready to spring at them. They talk and talk about it, and their papers write and write about it, till they inflame each other into a fever of pugnaciousness. I've never been anywhere in the least like it in my life. In England people talked of a thousand things, and hardly ever of war. When we were in Italy, and that time in Paris, we hardly heard it mentioned. Directly my train got into Germany at Goch coming from Flushing, and Germans began to get in, there in the very train this everlasting talk of war and the enviousness of other nations began, and it has never left off since. The Archduke's murder didn't start it; it was going on weeks before that, when first I came. It has been going on, Kloster says, growing in clamour, for years, ever since the present Kaiser succeeded to the throne. Kloster says the nation thinks it feels all this, but it is merely being stage-managed by the group of men at the top, headed by S. M. So well stage-managed is it, so carefully taught by such slow degrees, that it is absolutely convinced it has arrived at its opinions and judgments by itself. I wonder if these people are mad. Is it possible for a whole nation to go mad at once? It is they who seem to have the enviousness, to be torn with desire to get what isn't theirs.

"The disastrous crime of Serajevo," continued Pastor Wienicke, "cannot in this connection pass unnoticed. To smite down a God's Anointed!" He held up his hands. "Not yet, it is true, an actually Anointed, but set aside by God for future use. It is typical of the world outside our Fatherland. Lawlessness and its companion Sacrilege stalk at large. Women emerge from the seclusion God has arranged for them, and rear their heads in shameless competition with men. Our rulers, whom God has given us so that they shall guide and lead us and in return be reverently taken care of, are blasphemously bombed." He flung both his arms heavenwards. "Arise, Germany!" he cried. "Arise and show thyself! Arise in thy might, I say, and let our enemies be scattered!"

Then he wiped his forehead, looked round in recognition of the *sehr guts* and *ausserordentlich schön gesagts* that were being flung about, re-lit his cigar with the aid of the Herr Lehrer, who sprang obsequiously forward with a match, and sat down.

Wasn't it a good thing he sat down. I felt so much happier. But just as it was at the meals at Frau Berg's so it was at the coffee party here,—I was singled out and talked to,

or at, by the entire company. The concentration of curiosity of Germans is terrible. But it's more than curiosity, it's a kind of determination to crush what I'm thinking out of me and force what they're thinking into me. I *shall* see as they do; I *shall* think as they do; they'll shout at me till I'm forced to. That's what I feel. I don't a bit know if it isn't quite a wrong idea I've got, but somehow my very bones feel it.

Would you believe it, they stayed to supper, all of them, and never went away till ten o'clock. Frau Bornsted says one always does that in the country here when invited to afternoon coffee. I won't tell you any more of what they said, because it was all on exactly the same lines, the older men singling me out one by one and very loudly telling me variations of Pastor Wienicke's theme, the women going for me in twos and threes, more definitely bloodthirsty than the men, more like Frau Berg on the subject of blood-letting, more openly greedy. They were all disconcerted and uneasy because nothing more has been heard of the Austrian assassination. The silence from Vienna worries them, I gather, very much. They are afraid, actually they are afraid, Austria may be going to do nothing except just

punish the murderers, and so miss the glorious opportunity for war. I wonder if you can the least realize, you sane mother in a sane place, the state they're in here, the sort of boiling and straining. I'm sure the whole of Germany is the same,—lashed by the few behind the scenes into a fury of aggressive patriotism. They call it patriotism, but it is just blood-lust and loot-lust.

I helped Frau Bornsted get supper ready, and was glad to escape into the peace of the kitchen and stand safely frying potatoes. She was very sweet in her demure Sunday frock of plain black, and high up round her ears a little white frill. The solemnity and youth and quaintness of her are very attractive, and I could easily love her if it weren't for this madness about Deutschland. She is as mad as any of them, and in her it is much more disconcerting. We will be discoursing together gravely —she is always grave, and never knows how funny we both are being really—about amusing things like husbands and when and if I'm ever going to get one, and she, full of the dignity and wisdom of the married, will be giving me much sage counsel with sobriety and gentleness, when something starts her off about

Deutschland. Oh, they are *intolerable* about their Deutschland!

The Oberförster is calling for this—he's driving to the post, so good-bye little darling mother, little beloved and precious one.

Your Chris.

Schuppenfelde,
Thursday, July 16, 1914.

My blessed mother,

Here's Thursday evening in my week of nothing to do, and me meaning to write every day to you, and I haven't done it since Monday. It's because I've had so much time. Really it's because I've been in a sort of sleep of loveliness. I've been doing nothing except be happy. Not a soul has been near us since Sunday, and Frau Bornsted says not a soul will, till next Sunday. Each morning I've come down to a perfect world, with the sun shining through roses on to our breakfast-table in the porch, and after breakfast I've crossed the road and gone into the forest and not come back till late afternoon.

Frau Bornsted has been sweet about it, giving me a little parcel of food and sending me off with many good wishes for a happy day. I wanted to help her do her housework, but except my room she won't let me, having had orders from Kloster that I was to be completely idle. And it *is* doing me good. I feel so perfectly content these last three days.

There's nothing fretful about me any more; I feel harmonized, as if I were so much a part of the light and the air and the forest that I don't know now where they leave off and I begin. I sit and watch the fine-weather clouds drifting slowly across the tree-tops, and wonder if heaven is any better. I go down to the edge of the Haff, and lie on my face in the long grass, and push up my sleeves, and slowly stir the shallow golden water about among the rushes. I pick wild strawberries to eat with my lunch, and after lunch I lie on the moss and learn the Psalm for the day, first in English and then in German. About five I begin to go home, walking slowly through the hot scents of the afternoon forest, feeling as solemn and as exulting as I suppose a Catholic does when he comes away, shriven and blest, from confession. In the evening we sit out, and the little garden grows every minute more enchanted. Frau Bornsted rests after her labours, with her hands in her lap, and agrees with what the Oberförster every now and then takes his pipe out of his mouth to say, and I lie back in my chair and stare at the stars, and I think and think, and wonder and wonder. And what do you suppose I think and wonder about, little mother? You and love. I don't know why

I say you *and* love, for it's the same thing. And so is all this beauty of summer in the woods, and so is music, and my violin when it gets playing to me; and the future is full of it, and oh, I do so badly want to say thank you to some one!

Good night my most precious mother.

Your Chris.

Schuppenfelde,
Friday, July 17, 1914.

This morning when I came down to breakfast, sweet mother, there at the foot of the stairs was Herr von Inster. He didn't say anything, but watched me coming down with the contented look he has I like so much. I was frightfully pleased to see him, and smiled all over myself. "Oh," I exclaimed, "so you've come."

He held out his hand and helped me down the last steps. He was in green shooting clothes, like the Oberförster's, but without the official buttons, and looked very nice. You'd like him, I'm sure. You'd like what he looks like, and like what he is.

He had been in the forest since four this morning, shooting with his colonel, who came down with him to Köseritz last night. The colonel and Graf Köseritz, who came down from Berlin with them, were both breakfasting, attended by the Bornsteds, and it shows how soundly I sleep here that I hadn't heard anything.

"And aren't you having any breakfast?" I asked.

"I will now," he said. "I was listening for your door to open."

I think you'd like him *very* much, little mother.

The colonel, whose name is Graf Hohenfeld, was being very pleasant to Frau Bornsted, watching her admiringly as she brought him things to eat. He was very pleasant to me too, and got up and put his heels together and said, "Old England for ever" when I appeared, and asked the Graf whether Frau Bornsted and I didn't remind him of a nosegay of flowers. Obviously we didn't. The Graf doesn't look as if anybody ever reminded him of anything. He greeted me briefly, and then sat staring abstractedly at the tablecloth, as he did in Berlin. The Colonel did all the talking. Both he and the Graf had on those pretty green shooting things they wear in Germany, with the becoming soft hats and little feathers. He was very jovial indeed, seemed fond and proud of his lieutenant, Herr von Inster, slapped the Oberförster every now and then on the back, which made him nearly faint with joy each time, and wished it weren't breakfast and only coffee, because he would have liked to drink our

healths,—"The healths of these two delightful young roses," he said, bowing to Frau Bornsted and me, "the Rose of England—long live England, which produces such flowers—and the Rose of Germany, our own wild forest rose."

I laughed, and Frau Bornsted looked sedately indulgent,—I suppose because he is a great man, this staff officer, who helps work out all the wonderful plans that are some day to make Germany able to conquer the world; but, as she explained to me the other day when I said something about her eyelashes being so long and pretty, prettiness is out of place in her position, and she prefers it not mentioned. "What has the wife of an Oberförster to do with prettiness?" she asked. "It is good for a *junges Mädchen,* who has still to find a husband, but once she has him why be pretty? To be pretty when you are a married woman is only an undesirability. It exposes one easily to comment, and might cause, if one had not a solid character, an ever-afterwards-to-be-regretted expenditure on clothes."

The men were going to shoot with the Oberförster after breakfast and be all day in the forest, and the Colonel was going back to Berlin by the night train. He said he was

leaving his lieutenant at Köseritz for a few days, but that he himself had to get back into harness at once,—"While the young one plays around," he said, slapping Herr von Inster on the back this time instead of the Oberförster, "among the varied and delightful flora of our old German forests. Here this nosegay," he said, sweeping his arm in our direction, "and there at Köseritz—" sweeping his arm in the other direction, "a nosegay no less charming but more hot-house,—the *schöne* Helena and her young lady friends."

I asked Herr von Inster after breakfast, when we were alone for a moment in the garden, what his Colonel was like after dinner, if even breakfast made him so jovial.

"He is very clever," he said. "He is one of our cleverest officers on the Staff, and this is how he hides it."

"Oh," I said; for I thought it a funny explanation. Why hide it?

Perhaps that is what's the matter with the Graf,—he's hiding how clever *he* is.

But that Colonel certainly does seem clever. He asked where we live in England; a poser, rather, considering we don't at present live at all; but I told him where we did live, when Dad was alive.

"Ah," he said, "that is in Sussex. Very pretty just there. Which house was your home?"

I stared a little, for it seemed waste of time to describe it, but I said it was an old house on an open green.

"Yes," he said, nodding, "on the common. A very nice, roomy old house, with good outbuildings. But why do you not straighten out those corners on the road to Petworth? They are death traps."

"You've been there, then?" I said, astonished at the extreme smallness of the world.

"Never," he said, laughing. "But I study. We study, don't we, Inster my boy, at the old General Staff. And tell your Sussex County Council, beautiful English lady, to straighten out those corners, for they are very awkward indeed, and might easily cause serious accidents some day when the roads have to be used for real traffic."

"It is very good of you," I said politely, "to take such an interest in us."

"I not only take the greatest interest in you, charming young lady, and in your country, but I have an orderly mind and would be really pleased to see those corners straightened out. Use your influence, which I am sure must be

great, with that shortsighted body of gentlemen, your County Council."

"I shall not fail," I said, more politely than ever, "to inform them of your wishes."

"Ah, but she is delightful,—delightful, your little *Engländerin,*" he said gaily to Frau Bornsted, who listened to his *badinage* with grave and respectful indulgence; and he said a lot more things about England and its products and exports, meaning compliments to me—what *can* he be like after dinner?—and went off, jovial to the last, clicking his heels and kissing first Frau Bornsted's hand and then mine, in spite, as he explained, of its being against the rules to kiss the hand of a *junges Mädchen,* but his way was never to take any notice of rules, he said, if they got between him and a charming young lady. And so he went off, waving his green hat to us and calling out *Auf Wiedersehen* till the forest engulfed him.

Herr von Inster and the Graf went too, but quietly. The Graf went exceedingly quietly. He hadn't said a word to anybody, as far as I could see, and no rallyings on the part of the Colonel could make him. He didn't even react to being told what I gather is the German equivalent for a sly dog.

Herr von Inster said, when he could get a word in, that he is coming over to-morrow to drive me about the forest. His attitude while his Colonel rattled on was very interesting: his punctilious attention, his apparent obligation to smile when there were sallies demanding that form of appreciation, his carefulness not to miss any indication of a wish.

"Why do you do it?" I asked, when the Colonel was engaged for a moment with the Oberförster indoors. "Isn't your military service enough? Are you drilled even to your smiles?"

"To everything," he said. "Including our enthusiasms. We're like the *claque* at a theatre."

Then he turned and looked at me with those kind, surprising eyes of his,—they're so reassuring, somehow, after his stern profile—and said, "To-morrow I shall be a human being again, and forget all this,—forget everything except the beautiful things of life."

Now I must leave off, because I want to iron out my white linen skirt and muslin blouse for to-morrow, as it's sure to be hot and I may as well look as clean as I can, so good-bye darling little mother. Oh, I forgot to say how glad I am you like being at Glion. I did

mean to answer a great many things in your last letter, my little loved one, but I will to-morrow. It isn't that I don't read and re-read your darling letters, it's that one has such heaps to say oneself to you. Each time I write to you I seem to empty the whole contents of the days I've lived since I last wrote into your lap. But to-morrow I'll answer all your questions,—to-morrow evening, after my day with Herr von Inster, then I can tell you all about it.

Good-bye till then, sweet mother.

Your Chris.

Köseritz,

Saturday evening, July 18, 1914.

My darling little mother,

See where I've got to! Who'd have thought it? Life is really very exciting, isn't it. The Gräfin drove over to Schuppenfelde this afternoon, and took me away with her here. She said Kloster was coming for Sunday from Heringsdorf to them, and she knew he would want to see me and would go off to the Oberförsterei after me and leave her by herself if I were at the Bornsteds', and anyhow she wanted to see something of me before I went back to Berlin, and I couldn't refuse to give an old lady—she isn't a bit old—pleasure, and heaps of gracious things like that. Herr von Inster had brought a note from her in the morning, preparing my mind, and added his persuasions to hers. Not that I wanted persuading,—I thought it a heavenly idea, and didn't even mind Helena, because I felt that in a big house there'd be more room for her to stare at me in. And Herr von Inster is going to stay another week, taking his summer leave now instead of

later, and he says he will see me safe to Berlin when I go next Saturday.

So we had the happiest morning wandering about the forest, he driving and letting the horses go as slowly as they liked while we talked, and after our sandwiches he took me back to the Bornsteds, and I showed Frau Bornsted the Gräfin's letter.

If it hadn't been a Köseritz taking me away she would have been dreadfully offended at my wanting to go when only half my fortnight was over, but it was like a royal command to her, and she looked at me with greatly increased interest as the object of these high attentions. She had been inclined to warn me against Herr von Inster as a person removed by birth from my sphere —I suppose that's because I play the violin— and also against drives in forests generally if the parties were both unmarried; and she had been extraordinarily dignified when I laughed, and had told me it was all very well for me to laugh, being only an ignorant *junges Mädchen,* but she doubted whether my mother would laugh; and she watched our departure for our picnic very stiffly and unsmilingly from the porch. But after reading the Gräfin's letter I was treated more nearly as an

equal, and she became all interest and co-operation. She helped me pack, while Herr von Inster, who has a great gift for quiet patience, waited downstairs; and she told me how fortunate I was to be going to spend some days with Komtesse Helena, from whom I could learn, she said, what the real perfect *junges Mädchen* was like; and by the time the Gräfin herself drove up in her little carriage with the pretty white ponies, she was so much melted and stirred by a house-guest of hers being singled out for such an honour that she put her arm round my neck when I said good-bye, and whispered that though it wasn't really fit for a *junges Mädchen* to hear, she must tell me, as she probably wouldn't see me again, that she hoped shortly after Christmas to enrich the world by yet one more German.

I laughed and kissed her.

"It is no laughing matter," she said, with solemn eyes.

"No," I said, suddenly solemn too, remembering how Agatha Trent died.

And I took her face in both my hands and kissed her again, but with the seriousness of a parting blessing. For all her dignity, she has to reach up to me when I kiss her.

She put my hair tidy with a gentle hand,

and said, "You are not at all what a *junges Mädchen* generally is, but you are very nice. Please wish that my child may be a boy, so that I shall become the mother of a soldier."

I kissed her again, and got out of it that way, for I don't wish anything of the sort, and with that we parted.

Meanwhile the Gräfin had been sitting very firmly in her carriage, having refused all Frau Bornsted's entreaties to come in. It was wonderful to see how affable she was and yet how firm, and wonderful to see the gulf her affability put between the Bornsteds—he was at the gate too, bowing—and herself.

And now here I am, and it's past eleven, and my window opens right on to the Haff, and far away across the water I can see the lights of Swinemünde twinkling where the Haff joins the open sea. It is a most beautiful old house, centuries old, and we had a romantic evening,—first at supper in a long narrow pannelled room lit by candles, and then on the terrace beneath my window, where larkspurs grow against the low wall along the water's edge. There is nobody here except the Köseritzes, and Herr von Inster, and two girl-friends of Helena's, very pretty and smart-looking, and an old lady who was once the Gräfin's gov-

ernness and comes here every summer to enjoy what she called, speaking English to me, the Summer Fresh.

It was like a dream. The water made lovely little soft noises along the wall of the terrace. It was so still that we could hear the throb of a steamer far away on the Haff, crossing from Stettin to Swinemunde. The Graf, as usual, said nothing,—"He has much to think of," the Gräfin whispered to me. The girls talked together in undertones, which would have made me feel shy and out of it if I hadn't somehow not minded a bit, and they did look exactly what the Colonel had said they were, in their pale evening frocks,—a nosegay of very delicate and well cared-for hothouse flowers. I had on my evening frock for the first time since I left England, and after the weeks of high blouses felt conspicuously and terribly overdressed up in my bedroom and till I saw the frocks the others had on, and then I felt the exact opposite. Herr von Inster hardly spoke, and not to me at all, but I didn't mind, I had so much in my head that he had talked about this morning. I feel so completely natural with him, so content; and I think it is because he is here at Köseritz that I'm so comfortable, and not in the least shy, as I was that

day at luncheon. I simply take things as they come, and don't think about myself at all. When I came down to supper to-night he was waiting in the hall, to show me the way, he said; and he watched me coming down the stairs with that look in his eyes that is such a contrast to the smart, alert efficiency of his figure and manner,—it is so gentle, so kind. I went into the room where they all were with a funny feeling of being *safe*. I don't even know whether Helena stared.

To-morrow the Klosters come over, and are going to stay the night, and to-morrow I may play my fiddle again. I've faithfully kept my promise and not touched it. Really, as it's a quarter to twelve now and at midnight my week's fasting will be over, I might begin and play it quite soon. I wonder what would happen if I sat on my window-sill and played Ravel to the larkspurs and the stars! I believe it would make even the Graf say something. But I won't do anything so unlike, as Frau Bornsted would say, what a *junges Mädchen* generally does, but go to bed instead, into the prettiest bed I've slept in since I had a frilly cot in the nursery,—all pink silk coverlet and lace-edged sheets. The room is just like an English country-house bedroom; in fact the

Gräfin told me she got all her chintzes in London! It's so funny after my room at Frau Berg's, and my little unpainted wooden attic at the Oberförsterei.

Good night, my blessed mother. There are two owls somewhere calling to each other in the forest. Not another sound. Such utter peace.

Your Chris.

Köseritz,

Sunday evening, July 19, 1914.

My own darling mother,

I don't know what you'll say, but I'm engaged to Bernd. That's Herr von Inster. You know his name is Bernd? I don't know what to say to it myself. I can't quite believe it. This time last night I was writing to you in this very room, with no thought of anything in the world but just ordinary happiness with kind friends and one specially kind and understanding friend, and here I am twenty-four hours later done with ordinary happiness, taken into my lover's heart for ever.

It was so strange. I don't believe any girl ever got engaged in quite that way before. I'm sure everybody thinks we're insane, except Kloster. Kloster doesn't. He understands.

It was after supper. Only three hours ago. I wonder if it wasn't a dream. We were all on the terrace, as we were last night. The Klosters had come early in the afternoon. There wasn't a leaf stirring, and not a sound except that lapping water against the bottom of the wall where the larkspurs are. You know how

sometimes when everybody has been talking together without stopping there's a sudden hush. That happened to-night, and after what seemed a long while of silence the Gräfin said to Kloster, "I suppose, Master, it would be too much to ask you to play to us?"

"Here?" he said. "Out here?"

"Why not?" she said.

I hung breathless on what he would say. Suppose he played, out there in the dusk, with the stars and the water and the forest all round us, what would it be like?

He got up without a word and went indoors.

The Gräfin looked uneasy. "I hope," she said to Frau Kloster, "my asking has not offended him?"

But Bernd knew—Bernd, still at that moment only Herr von Inster for me. "He is going to play," he said.

And presently he came out again with his Strad, and standing on the step outside the drawingroom window he played.

I thought, This is the most wonderful moment of my life. But it wasn't; there was a more wonderful one coming.

We sat there in the great brooding night, and the music told us the things about love and God that we know but can never say.

When he had done nobody spoke. He stood on the step for a minute in silence, then he came down to where I was sitting on the low wall by the water and put the Strad into my hands. "Now you," he said.

Nobody spoke. I felt as though I were asleep.

He took my hand and made me stand up. "Play what you like," he said; and left me there, and went and sat down again on the steps by the window.

I don't know what I played. It was the violin that played while I held it and listened. I forgot everybody,—forgot Kloster critically noting what I did wrong, and forgot, so completely that I might have been unconscious, myself. I was *listening;* and what I heard were secrets, secrets strange and exquisite; noble, and so courageous that suffering didn't matter, didn't touch,—all the secrets of life. I can't explain. It wasn't like anything one knows really. It was like something very important, very beautiful that one *used* to know, but has forgotten.

Presently the sounds left off. I didn't feel as though I had had anything to do with their leaving off. There was dead silence. I stood wondering rather confusedly, as one wonders

when first one wakes from a dream and sees familiar things again and doesn't quite understand.

Kloster got up and came and took the Strad from me. I could see his face in the dusk, and thought it looked queer. He lifted up my hands one after the other, and kissed them.

But Bernd got up from where he was sitting away from the others, and took me in his arms and kissed my eyes.

And that's how we were engaged. I think they said something. I don't know what it was, but there was a murmur, but I seemed very far away and very safe; and he turned round when they murmured, and took my hand, and said, "This is my wife." And he looked at me and said, "Is it not so?" And I said "Yes." And I don't remember what happened next, and perhaps it was all a dream. I'm so tired,—so tired and heavy with happiness that I could drop in a heap on the floor and go to sleep like that. Beloved mother—bless your Chris.

Köseritz, Monday, July 20.

My own darling mother,

I'm too happy,—too happy to write, or think, or remember, or do anything except be happy. You'll forgive me, my own ever-understanding mother, because the minutes I have to take for other things seem so snatched away and lost, snatched from the real thing, the one real thing, which is my lover. Oh, I expect I'm shameless, and I don't care. Ought I to simper, and pretend I don't feel particularly much? Be ladylike, and hide how I adore him? Telegraph to me —telegraph your blessing. I *must* be blessed by you. Till I have been, it's like not having had my crown put on, and standing waiting, all ready in my beautiful clothes of happiness except for that. I don't care if I'm silly. I don't care about anything. I don't know what they think of our engagement here. I imagine they deplore it on Bernd's account,—he's an officer and a Junker and an only son and a person of promise, and altogether heaps of important things besides *the* important

thing, which is that he's Bernd. And you see, little mother, I'm only a woman who is going to have a profession, and that's an impossible thing from the Junker point of view. It's queer how nothing matters, no criticism or disapproval, how one can't be *touched* directly one loves somebody and is loved back. It is like being inside a magic ring of safety. Why, I don't think that there's *anything* that could hurt me so long as we love each other. We've had a wonderful morning walking in the forest. It's all quite true what happened last night. It wasn't a dream. We are engaged. I've hardly seen the others. They congratulated us quite politely. Kloster was *very* kind, but anxious lest I should let love, as he says, spoil art. We laughed at that. Bernd, who would have been a musician but for his family and his obligations, is going to be it vicariously through me. I shall work all the harder with him to help me. How right you were about a lover being the best of all things in the world! I don't know how anybody gets on without one. I can't think how *I* did. It amazes me to remember that I used to think I was happy. Bless me, little mother—bless us. Send a telegram. I can't wait.

Your Chris.

Köseritz, Thursday, July 23.

My own mother,

Thank you so much for your telegram of blessing, darling one, which I have just had. It seems to set the seal of happiness on me. I know you will love Bernd, and understand directly you see him why I do. We are so placid here these beautiful summer days. Everybody accepts us now resignedly as a *fait accompli,* and though they remain unenthusiastic they are polite and tolerant. And whenever I play to them they all grow kind. It's rather like being Orpheus with his lute, and they the mountain tops that freeze. I've discovered I can melt them by just making music. Helena really does love music. It was quite true what her mother said. Since I played that first wonderful night of my engagement she has been quite different to me. She still is silent, because that's her nature, and she still stares; but now she stares in a sort of surprise, with a question in her eyes. And wherever she may be in the house or garden, if she hears me be-

ginning to play she creeps near on tiptoe and listens.

Kloster has gone. He and his wife were both very kind to us, but Kloster is worried because I've fallen in love. I'm not to go back to Berlin till Monday, as Bernd can stay on here till then, and there's no point in spending a Sunday in Berlin unless one has to. Kloster is going to give me three lessons a week instead of two, and I shall work now with such renewed delight! He says I won't, but I know better. Everything I do seems to be touched now with delight. How funny that room at Frau Berg's will look and feel after being here. But I don't mind going back to it one little half a scrap. Bernd will be in Berlin; he'll be writing to me, seeing me, walking with me. With him there it will be, every bit of it, perfect.

"When I come back to town in October," the Gräfin said to me, "you must stay with us. It is not fitting that Bernd's betrothed should live in that boarding-house of Frau Berg's. Will not your mother soon join you?"

It is very kind of her, I think. It appears that a girl who is engaged has to be chaperoned even more than a girl who isn't. What funny ancient stuff these conventions are. I wonder

how long more we shall have of them. Of course Frau Berg and her boarders are to the Junker dreadful beyond words.

But her question about you set me thinking. Won't you come, little mother? As it is such an unusual and never-to-be-repeated occurrence in our family that its one and only child should be going to marry? And yet I can't quite see you in August in lodgings in Berlin, come down from your beautiful mountain, away from your beautiful lake. After all, I've only got four more months of it, and then I'm finished and can go back to you. What is going to happen then, exactly, I don't know. Bernd says, Marry, and that you'll come and live with us in Germany. That's all very well, but what about, if I marry so soon, starting my public career, which was to have begun this next winter? Kloster says impatiently, Oh marry, and get done with it, and that then I'll be sensible again and able to arrange my *début* as a violinist with the calm, I gather he thinks, of the disillusioned.

"I'm perfectly sensible," I said.

"You are not. You are in love. A woman should never be an artist. Again I say, Mees Chrees, what I have said to you before, that it is sheer malice on the part of Providence to

have taken you, a woman, as the vessel which is to carry this great gift about the world. A man, gifted to the extent you so unluckily are, falls in love and is inspired by it. Indeed, it is in that condition that he does his best work; which is why the man artist is so seldom a faithful husband, for the faithful husband is precluded from being in love."

"Why can't he be in love?" I asked, husbands now having become very interesting to me.

"Because he is a faithful husband."

"But he can be in love with his wife."

"No," said Kloster, "he cannot. And he cannot for the same reason that no man can go on wanting his dinner who has had it. Whereas," he went on louder, because I had opened my mouth and was going to say something, "a woman artist who falls in love neglects everything and merely loves. Merely loves," he repeated, looking me up and down with great severity and disfavour.

"You'll see how I'll work," I said.

"Nonsense," he said, waving that aside impatiently. "Which is why," he continued, "I urge you to marry quickly. Then the woman, so unfortunately singled out by Providence to be something she is not fitted for, having mar-

ried and secured her husband, prey, victim, or whatever you prefer to call him—"

"I prefer to call him husband," I said.

"—if she succeeds in steering clear of detaining and delaying objects like cradles, is cured and can go back with proper serenity to that which alone matters, Art and the work necessary to produce it. But she will have wasted time," he said, shaking his head. "She will most sadly have wasted time."

In my turn I said Nonsense, and laughed with that heavenly, glorious security one has when one has a lover.

I expect there are some people who may be as Kloster says, but we're not like them, Bernd and I. We're not going to waste a minute. He adores my music, and his pride in it inspires me and makes me glow with longing to do better and better for his sake, so as to see him moved, to see him with that dear look of happy triumph in his eyes. Why, I feel lifted high up above any sort of difficulty or obstacle life can try to put in my way. I'm going to work when I get to Berlin as I never did before.

I said something like this to Kloster, who replied with great tartness that I oughtn't to

want to do anything for the sake of producing a certain look in somebody's eyes. "That is not Art, Mees Chrees. That is nothing that will ever be any good. You are, you see, just the veriest woman; and here—" he almost cried —"is this gift, this precious immortal gift, placed in such shaky small hands as yours."

"I'm very sorry," I said, feeling quite ashamed that I had it, he was so much annoyed.

"No, no," he said, relenting a little, "do not be sorry—marry. Marry quickly. Then there may be recovery."

And when he was saying good-bye—I tell you this because it will amuse you—he said with a kind of angry grief that if Providence were determined in its unaccountable freakishness to place a gift which should be so exclusively man's in the shell or husk (I forget which he called it, but anyhow it sounded contemptuous), of a woman, it might at least have selected an ugly woman. "It need not," he said angrily, "have taken one who was likely in any case to be selected for purposes of love-making, and given her, besides the ordinary collection of allurements provided by nature to attract the male, a *Beethovenkopf*. Never should that wide sweep of brow and those deep

set eyes, the whole noble thoughtfulness of such a head,"—you mustn't think me vain, little mother, he positively said all these things and was so angry—"have been combined with the rubbish, in this case irrelevant and actually harmful, that goes to make up the usual pretty young face. Mees Chrees, I could have wished you some minor deformity, such as many spots, for then you would not now be in this lamentable condition of being loved and responding to it. And if," he said as a parting shot, "Providence was determined to commit this folly, it need not have crowned it by choosing an Englishwoman."

"What?" I said, astonished, following him out on to the steps, for he has always seemed to like and admire us.

"The English are not musical," he said, climbing into the car that was to take him to the station, and in which Frau Kloster had been patiently waiting. "They are not, they never were, and they never will be. Purcell? A fig for your Purcell. You cannot make a great gallery of art out of one miniature, however perfect. And as for your moderns, your Parrys and Stanfords and Elgars and the rest, why, what stuff are they? Very nice, very good, very conscientious: the translation into

musical notation of respectable English gentlemen in black coats and silk hats. They are the British Stock Exchange got into music. No, no," he said, tucking the dust-cover round himself and his wife, "the English are not musicians. And you," he called back as the car was moving, "You, Mees Chrees, are a freak,—nothing whatever but a freak and an accident."

We turned away to go indoors. The Gräfin said she considered he might have wished her good-bye. "After all," she remarked, "I was his hostess."

She looked thoughtfully at me and Bernd as we stood arm-in-arm aside at the door to let her pass. "These geniuses," she said, laying her hand a moment on Bernd's shoulder, "are interesting but difficult."

I think, little mother, she meant me, and was feeling a little sorry for Bernd!

Isn't it queer how people don't understand. Anyhow, when she had gone in we looked at each other and laughed, and Bernd took my hands and kissed them one after the other, and said something so sweet, so dear,—but I can't tell you what it was. That's the worst of this having a lover,—all the most wonderful, beautiful things that are being said to me by him

are things I can't tell you, my mother, my beloved mother whom I've always told everything to all my life. Just the things you'd love most to hear, the things that crown me with glory and pride, I can't tell you. It is because they're sacred. Sacred and holy to him and to me. You must imagine them, my precious one; imagine the very loveliest things you'd like said to your Chris, and they won't be half as lovely as what is being said to her.

I must go now, because Bernd and I are going sailing on the Haff in a fishing boat there is. We're taking tea, and are going to be away till the evening. The fishing boat has orange-coloured sails, and is quite big,—I mean you can walk about on her and she doesn't tip up. We're going to run her nose into the rushes along the shore when we're tired of sailing, and Bernd is going to hear me say my German psalms and read Heine to me. Goodbye then for the moment, my little darling one. How very heavenly it is being engaged, and having the right to go off openly for hours with the one person you want to be with, and nobody can say, "No, you mustn't." Do you know Bernd has to have the Kaiser's permission to marry? All officers have to, and he quite often says no. The girl has to prove she

has an income of her own of at least 5000 marks —that's £250 a year—and be of demonstrably decent birth. Well, the birth part is all right —I wonder if the Kaiser knows how to pronounce Cholmondeley—and of course once I get playing at concerts I shall earn heaps more than the £250; so I expect we shall be able to arrange that. Kloster will give me a certificate of future earning powers, I'm sure. But marrying seems so far off, such a dreamy thing, that I've not begun really to think of it. Being engaged is quite lovely enough to go on with. There's Bernd calling.

Evening.

I've just come in. It's ten o'clock. I've had the most perfect day. Little mother, what an amazingly beautiful world it is. Everything is combining to make this summer the most wonderful of summers for me. How I shall think of it when I am old, and laugh for joy. The weather is so perfect, people are so kind, my playing prospects are so encouraging; and there's Bernd. Did you ever know such a lot of lovely things for one girl? All my days are filled with sunshine and love. Everywhere I look there's nothing but kindness. Do you think the world is getting really

kinder, or is it only that I'm so happy? I can't help thinking that all that talk I heard in Berlin, all that restlessness and desire to hit out at somebody, anybody,—the knock-him-down-and-rob him idea they seemed obsessed with, was simply because it was drawing near the holiday time of year, and every one was overworked and nervy after a year's being cooped up in offices; and then the great heat came and finished them. They were cross, like overtired children, cross and quarrelsome. How cross I was too, tormented by those flies! After this month, when everybody has been away at the sea and in the forests, they'll be different, and as full of kindliness and gentleness as these gentle kind skies are, and the morning and the evening, and the placid noons. I don't believe anybody who has watched cows pasturing in golden meadows, as Bernd and I have for hours this afternoon, or heard water lapping among reeds, or seen eagles shining far up in the blue above the pine trees, and drawn in with every breath the sweetness, the extraordinary warm sweetness, of this summer in places in the forests and by the sea,—I don't believe people who had done that could for at least another year want to quarrel and fight. And by the time they did want to, having got jumpy

in the course of months of uninterrupted herding together, it will be time for them to go for holidays again, back to the blessed country to be soothed and healed. And each year we shall grow wiser, each year more grown-up, less like naughty children, nearer to God. All we want is time,—time to think and understand. I feel religious now. Happiness has made me so religious that I would satisfy even Aunt Edith. I'm sure happiness brings one to God much quicker than ways of grief. Indeed it's the only right way of being brought, I think. You know, little mother, I've always hated the idea of being *kicked* to God, of getting on to our knees because we've been beaten till we can't stand. I think if I were to lose what I love,—you, Bernd, or be hurt in my hands so that I couldn't play,—it wouldn't make me good, it would make me bad. I'd go all hard, and defy and rebel. And really God ought to like that best. It's at least a square and manly attitude. Think how we would despise any creature who fawned on us, and praised and thanked us because we had been cruel. And why should God be less fine than we are? Oh well, I must go to bed. One can't settle God in the tail-end of a letter. But I'm going to say prayers tonight, real

prayers of gratitude, real upliftings of the heart in thanks and praise. I think I was always happy, little mother. I don't remember anything else; but it wasn't this secure happiness. I used to be anxious sometimes. I knew we were poor, and that you were so very precious. Now I feel safe, safe about you as well as myself. I can look life in the eyes, quite confident, almost careless. I have such faith in Bernd! Two together are so strong, if one of the two is Bernd.

Good night my blessed mother of my heart. I'm going to say thank-prayers now, for you, for him, for the whole beautifulness of the world. My windows are wide open on to the Haff. There's no sound at all, except that little plop, plop, of the water against the terrace wall. Sometimes a bird flutters for a moment in the trees of the forest on either side of the garden, turning over in its sleep, I suppose, and then everything is still again, so still; just as if some great cool hand were laid gently on the hot forehead of the world and was hushing it to sleep.

Your Chris who loves you.

Köseritz, Friday, July 25th, 1914.

Beloved mother,

Bernd was telegraphed for this afternoon from headquarters to go back at once to Berlin, and he's gone. I'm rubbing my eyes to see if I'm awake, it has been so sudden. The whole house seemed changed in an instant. The Graf went too. The newspaper doesn't get here till we are at lunch, and is always brought in and laid by the Graf, and today there was the Austrian ultimatum to Servia in it, and when the Graf saw that in the headlines of the *Tageszeitung* he laid it down without a word and got up and left the room. Bernd reached over for the paper to see what had happened, and it was that. He read it out to us. "This means war," he said, and the Gräfin said, "Hush," very quickly; I suppose because she couldn't bear to hear the word. Then she got up too, and went after the Graf, and we were left, Helena and the governess, and the children, and Bernd, and I at a confused and untidy table, everybody with a question in their eyes, and the servants' hands not very steady as they held the dishes. The menservants would

all have to go and fight if there were war. No wonder the dishes shook a little, for they can't but feel excited.

As soon as we could get away from the diningroom Bernd and I went out into the garden—the Graf and Gräfin hadn't reappeared—and he said that though for a moment he had thought Austria's ultimatum would mean war, it was only just the first moment, but that he believed Servia would agree to everything, and the crisis would blow over in the way so many of them had blown over before.

I asked him what would happen if it didn't; I wanted things explained to me clearly, for positively I'm not quite clear about which nations would be fighting; and he said why talk about hateful things like war as long as there wasn't a war. He said that as long as his chief left him peacefully at Köseritz and didn't send for him to Berlin I might be sure it was going to be just a local quarrel, for his being sent for would mean that all officers on leave were being sent for, and that the Government was at least uneasy. Then at four o'clock came the telegram. The Government is, accordingly, at least uneasy.

I saw hardly any more of him. He got his

things together with a quickness that astonished me, and he and the Graf, who was going to Berlin by the same train, motored to Stettin to catch the last express. Just before they left he caught hold of my hand and pulled me into the library where no one was, and told me how he thanked God I was English. "Chris, if you had been French or Russian,"—he said, looking as though the very thought filled him with horror. He laid his face against mine. "I'd have loved you just the same," he said, "I could have done nothing else but love you, and think, think what it would have meant—"

"Then it will be Germany as well, if there's war?" I said, "Germany as well as Austria, and France and Russia—what, almost all Europe?" I exclaimed, incredulous of such a terror.

"Except England," he said; and whispered, "Oh, thank God, except England." Somebody opened the door an inch and told him he must come at once. I whispered in his ear that I would go back to Berlin tomorrow and be near him. He went out so quickly that by the time I got into the hall after him the car was tearing down the avenue, and I only caught a flash of the sun on his helmet as he disappeared round the corner.

It has all been so quick. I can't believe it quite. I don't know what to think, and nobody says anything here. The Gräfin, when I ask her what she thinks, says soothingly that I needn't worry my little head—my little head! As though I were six, and made of sugar—and that everything will settle down again. "Europe is in an excited state," she says placidly, "and suspects danger round every corner, and when it has reached the corner and looked round it, it finds nothing there after all. It has happened often before, and will no doubt happen again. Go to bed, my child, and forget politics. Leave them to older and more experienced heads. Always our Kaiser has been on the side of peace, and we can trust him to smooth down Austria's ruffled feathers."

Greatly doubting her Kaiser, after all I've heard of him at Kloster's, I was too polite to be anything but silent, and came up to my room obediently. If there is war, then Bernd—oh well, I'm tired. I don't think I'll write any more tonight. But I do love you so very much, darling mother. Your Chris.

What a mercy that mothers are women, and needn't go away and fight. Wouldn't it have been too awful if they had been men!

Köseritz,
Saturday, July 25th, 1914.

You know, my beloved one, I'd much rather be at Frau Berg's in Berlin and independent, and able to see Bernd whenever he can come, without saying dozens of thank you's and may I's to anybody each time, and I had arranged to go today, and now the Gräfin won't let me. She says she'll take me up on Monday when she and Helena go. They're going for a short time because they want to be nearer any news there is than they are here, and she says it wouldn't be right for her, so nearly my aunt, to allow me, so nearly her niece, to stay by myself in a pension while she is in her house in the next street. What would people say? she asked—*was würden die Leute sagen,* as every German before doing or refraining from doing a thing invariably inquires. They all from top to bottom seem to walk in terror of *die Leute* and what they would *sagen.* So I'm to go to her house in the Sommerstrasse, and live in chaperoned splendour for as long as she is there. She says she is certain my

mother would wish it. I'm not a bit certain, I who know my mother and know how beautifully empty she is of conventions and how divinely indifferent to *die Leute;* but as I'm going to marry a German of the Junker class I suppose I must appease his relations,—at any rate till I've got them, by gentle and devious methods, a little more used to me. So I gave in sullenly. Don't be afraid,—only sullenly inside, not outside. Outside I was so well-bred and pleased, you can't think. It really is very kind of the Gräfin, and her want of enthusiasm, which was marked, only makes it all the kinder. On that principle, too, my gratefulness, owing to an equal want of enthusiasm, is all the more grateful.

I don't want to wait here till Monday. I'd like to have gone today,—got through all the miles of slow forest that lie between us and the nearest railway station, the miles of forest news has to crawl through by slow steps, dragged towards us in a cart at a walking pace once a day. Nearly all today and quite all tomorrow we shall sit here in this sunny emptiness. It is a wonderful day again, but to me it's like a body with the soul gone, like the meaningless smile of a handsome idiot. Evidently, little mother, your unfortunate Chris is very seri-

ously in love. I don't believe it is news I want to be nearer to: it's Bernd.

As for news, the papers today seem to think things will arrange themselves. They're rather unctuous about it, but then they're always unctuous,—as though, if they had eyes, they would be turned up to heaven with lots of the pious whites showing. They point out the awful results there would be to the whole world if Servia, that miserable small criminal, should dare not satisfy the just demands of Germany's outraged and noble ally Austria. But of course Servia will. They take that for granted. Impossible that she shouldn't. The Kaiser is cruising in his yacht somewhere up round Norway, and His Majesty has shown no signs, they say, of interrupting his holiday. As long as he stays away, they remark, nothing serious can happen. What an indictment of S. M.! As long as he stays away, playing about, there will be peace. How excellent it would be, then, if he stayed away and played indefinitely.

I wanted to say this to the Gräfin when she read the papers aloud to us at lunch, and I wonder what would have happened to me if I had. Well, though I've got to stay with her and be polite in the Sommerstrasse, I

shall escape every other day to that happy, rude place, Kloster's flat, and can say what I like. I think I told you he is going to give me three lessons a week now.

After tea.

I practised most of the morning. I wrote to Bernd, and told him about Monday, and told him—oh, lots of little things I just happened to think of. I went out after lunch and lay in the meadow by the water's edge with a book I didn't read, the same meadow Bernd and I anchored our fishing boat at only the day before yesterday, but really ten years ago, and I lay so quiet that the cows forgot me, and came and scrunched away at the grass quite close to my head. We had tea as usual on the terrace in the shady angle of the south-west walls, and the Gräfin discoursed placidly on the political situation. She was most instructive; calmly imparting knowledge to Helena and me; calmly embroidering a little calm-looking shirt for her married daughter's baby, with calm, cool white fingers. She seemed very content with the world, and the way it is behaving. She looked as unruffled as one of the swans on the Haff. All the sedition and heretical opinions she must have heard Kloster fling about have

slid off her without leaving a mark. Evidently she pays no attention to anything he thinks, on the ground that he is a genius. Geniuses are privileged lunatics. I gather that is rather how she feels. She was quite interesting about Germany,—her talk was all of Germany. She knows a great deal of its history and I think she must have told us all she knew. By the time the servants came to take away the tea-things I had a distinct vision of Germany as the most lovable of little lambs with a blue ribbon round its neck, standing knee-deep in daisies and looking about the world with kind little eyes.

Good-bye darling mother. Saturday is nearly over now. By this time the time limit for Servia has expired. I wonder what has happened. I wonder what you in Switzerland are feeling about it. You know, my dearest one, I'll interrupt my lessons and come to Switzerland if you have the least shred of a wish that I should; and perhaps if Bernd really had to go away—supposing the unlikely were to happen after all and there were war—I'd *want* to come creeping back close to you till he is safe again. And yet I don't know. Surely the right thing would be to go on, whatever happens, quietly working with Kloster till

October as we had planned. But you've only got to lift your little finger, and I'll come. I mean, if you get thinking things and feeling worried.

Your Chris.

Köseritz,
Sunday evening, July 26th.

Beloved mother,

I've packed, and I'm ready. We start early tomorrow. The newspapers, for some reason, perhaps excitement and disorganization, didn't come today, but the Graf telephoned from Berlin about the Austro-Hungarian minister having asked the Servian government for his passports and left Belgrade. You'll know about this today too. The Gräfin, still placid, says Austria will now very properly punish Servia, both for the murder and for the insolence of refusing her, Austria's, just demands. The Graf merely telephoned that Servia had refused. It did seem incredible. I did think Servia would deserve her punishing. Yesterday's papers said the demands were most reasonable considering what had been done. I hadn't read the Austrian note, because of the confusion of Bernd's sudden going away, and I was full of indignation at Servia's behaviour, piling insult on injury in this way and risking setting Europe by the ears, but was pulled up short and set thinking by the Gräfin's looking

pleased at my expressions of indignation, and her coming over to me to pat my cheek and say, "This child will make an excellent little German."

Then I thought I'd better wait and know more before sweeping Servia out of my disgusted sight. There are probably lots of other things to know. Kloster will tell me. I find I have a profound distrust *really* of these people. I don't mean of particular people, like the Köseritzes and the Klosters and their friends, but of Germans in the mass. It is a sort of deep-down discomfort of spirit, the discomfort of disagreement in fundamentals.

"Then there'll be war?" I said to the Gräfin, staring at her placid face, and not a bit pleased about being going to be an excellent little German.

"Oh, a punitive expedition only," she said.

"Bernd thought it would mean Russia and France and you as well," I said.

"Oh, Bernd—he is in love," said the Gräfin, smiling.

"I don't quite see—" I began.

"Lovers always exaggerate," she said. "Russia and France will not interfere in so just a punishment."

"But is it just?" I asked.

She gazed at me critically at this. It was not, she evidently considered, a suitable remark for one whose business it was to turn into an excellent little German. "Dear child," she said, "you cannot suppose that our ally, the Kaiser's ally, would make demands that are not just?"

"Do you think Friday's papers are still anywhere about?" was my answer. "I'd like to read the Austrian note, and think it over for myself. I haven't yet."

The Gräfin smiled at this, and rang the bell. "I expect Dörner"—Dörner is the butler—"has them," she said. "But do not worry your little head this hot weather too much."

"It won't melt," I said, resenting that my head should be regarded as so very small and also made of sugar,—she said something like this the other day, and I resented that too.

"There are people whose business it is to think these high matters out for us," she said, "and in their hands we can safely leave them."

"As if they were God," I remarked.

She looked at me critically again. "Precisely," she said. "Loyal subjects, true Christians, are alike in their unquestioning trust and obedience to authority."

I came upstairs then, in case I shouldn't be

able to keep from saying something truthful and rude.

What a misfortune it is that truth always *is* so rude. So that a person who, like myself, for reasons that I can't help thinking are on the whole base, is anxious to hang on to being what servants call a real lady, is accordingly constantly forced into a regrettable want of candour. I wish Bernd weren't a Junker. It is a great blot on his perfection. I'd much rather he were a navvy, a stark, swearing navvy, and we could go in for stark, swearing candour, and I needn't be a lady any more. It's so middle-class being a lady. These German aristocrats are hopelessly middle-class.

I know when I get to Berlin, and only want to keep abreast of the real things that may be going to happen, which will take me all my time, for I haven't been used to big events, it will be very annoying to be caught and delayed at every turn by small nets of politenesses and phrases and considerations, by having to remember every blessed one of the manners they go in for so terribly here. I've never met so *much* manners as in Germany. The protestations you have to make! The elaborateness and length of every acceptance or refusal! And it's all so much fluff and wind, signifying

nothing, nothing at all unless it's fear; fear, again, their everlasting haunting spectre; fear of the other person's being offended if he is stronger than you, higher up,—because then he'll hurt you, punish you somehow; ten to one, if you're a man, he'll fight you.

I've read the Austrian Note. I don't wonder very much at Servia's refusing to accept it, and yet surely it would have been wiser if she had accepted it, anyhow as much of it as she *possibly* could.

"Much wiser," said the Gräfin, smiling gently when I said this at dinner tonight. "At least, wiser for Servia. But it is well so." And she smiled again.

I've come to the conclusion that the Gräfin too wants war,—a big European war, so that Germany, who is so longing to get that tiresome rattling sword of hers out of the scabbard, can seize the excuse and rush in. One only has to have stayed here, lived among them and heard them talk, to *know* that they're all on tiptoe for an excuse to start their attacking. They've been working for years for the moment when they can safely attack. It has been the Kaiser's one idea, Kloster says, during the whole of his reign. Of course it's true it has been a peaceful reign,—they're always

pointing that out here when endeavouring to convince a foreigner that the last thing their immense preparations mean is war; of course a reign is peaceful up to the moment when it isn't. They've edged away carefully up to now from any possible quarrel, because they weren't ready for the almighty smash they mean to have when they *are* ready. They've prepared to the smallest detail. Bernd told me that the men who can't fight, the old and unfit, each have received instructions for years and years past every autumn, secret exact instructions, as to what they are to do, when war is declared, to help in the successful killing of their brothers,—their brothers, little mother, for whom, too, Christ died. Each of these aged or more or less diseased Germans, the left-overs who really can't possibly fight, has his place allotted to him in these secret orders in the nearest town to where he lives, a place supervising the stores or doing organizing work. Every other man, except those who have the luck to be idiots or dying—what a world to have to live in, when this is luck—will fight. The women, and the thousands of imported Russians and Poles, will look after the farms for the short time the men will be

away, for it is to be a short war, a few weeks only, as short as the triumphant war of 1870. Did you ever know anything so horrifying, so evil, as this minute concentration, year in year out, for decades, on killing—on successful, triumphant killing, just so that you can grab something that doesn't belong to you. It is no use dressing it up in big windy words like *Deutschthum* and the rest of the stuff the authorities find it convenient to fool their slaves with,—it comes to exactly that. I always, you see, think of Germany as the grabber, the attacker. Anything else, now that I've lived here, is simply inconceivable. A defensive war in which she should have to defend her homes from wanton attack is inconceivable. There is no wantonness now in the civilized nations. We have outgrown the blood stage. We are sober peoples, sober and civilian,—grown up, in fact. And the semi-civilized peoples would be afraid to attack a nation so strong as Germany. She is training and living, and has been training and living for years and years, simply to attack. What is the use of their protesting? One has only to listen to their points of view to brush aside the perfunctory protestations they put in every now and then, as if by order,

whenever they remember not to be natural. Oh, I know this is very different from what I was writing and feeling two or three days ago, but I've been let down with a jerk, I'm being reminded of the impressions I got in Berlin, they've come up sharply again, and I'm not so confident that what was the matter with the people there was only heat and overwork. There was an eagerness about them, a kind of fever to begin their grabbing. I told you, I think, how Berlin made me think when first I got there of something *seething*.

Darling mother, forgive me if I'm shrill. I wouldn't be shrill, I'm certain I wouldn't, if I could believe in the necessity, the justice of such a war, if Germany weren't going to war but war were coming to Germany. And I'm afraid,—afraid because of Bernd. Suppose he—Well, perhaps by the time we get to Berlin things will have calmed down, and the Gräfin will be able to come back straight here, which God grant, and I shall go back to Frau Berg and my flies. I shall regard those flies now with the utmost friendliness. I shan't mind anything they do.

Good night blessed mother. I'm so thankful these two days are over.

Your Chris.

It is this silence here, this absurd peaceful sunshine, and the placid Gräfin, and the bland unconsciousness of nature that I find hard to bear.

Berlin, Wednesday, July 29th.

My own little mother,

It is six o'clock in the morning, and I'm in my dressing-gown writing to you, because if I don't do it now I shall be swamped with people and things, as I was all yesterday and the day before, and not get a moment's quiet. You see, there is going to be war, almost to a dead certainty, and the Germans have gone mad. The effect even on this house is feverish, so that getting up very early will be my only chance of writing to you.

You never saw anything like the streets yesterday. They seemed full of drunken people, shouting up and down with red faces all swollen with excitement. It is of course intensely interesting and new to me, who have never been closer to such a thing as war than history lessons at school, but what do they all think they're going to get, what do they all think it's really *for,* these poor creatures bellowing and strutting, and waving their hats and handkerchiefs, and even their babies, high over their heads whenever a *königliche*

Hoheit dashes past in a motor, which happens every five minutes because there are such a lot of them. Our drive from Köseritz to Stettin on Monday, which now seems so remote that it is as if it was another life, was the last beautiful ordinary thing that happened. Since then it has been one great noise and ugliness. I can't forget the look of the country as we passed through it on Monday, so lovely in its summer peacefulness, the first rye being cut in the fields, the hedges full of Traveler's Joy. I didn't notice how beautiful it was at the time, I only wanted to get on, to get away, to get the news; but now I'm here I remember it as something curiously *innocent,* and I'm so glad we had a puncture that made us stop for ten minutes in a bit of the road where there were great cornfields as far as one could see, and a great stretch of sky with peaceful little white clouds that hardly moved, and only the sound of poplars by the roadside rustling their leaves with that lovely liquid sound they make, and larks singing. It comforts me to call this up again, to hide in it for a minute away from the shouting of *Deutschland über Alles,* and the *hochs* and yellings. Then we got to Stettin; and since then I have lived in ugliness.

The Kaiser came back on Monday. He had

arrived in Berlin by the time we got here, and the Gräfin's triumphant calm visibly increased when the footman who met us at the station eagerly told her the news. For this, as the papers said that evening, hardly able to conceal their joy beneath their pious hopes that the horrors of war may even yet be spared the world, reveals the full seriousness of the situation. I like the "even yet," don't you? Bernd was at the station, and drove with us to the Sommerstrasse. We went along the Dorotheenstrasse, at the back of Unter den Linden, as the Lindens were choked with people. It was impossible to get through them. They were a living wedge of people, with frantic mounted policemen trying to get them to go somewhere else.

Bernd was so dear, and oh it was such a blessing to be near him again! But he was solemn, and didn't smile at all except when he looked at me. Then that dear smile that is so full of goodness changed his whole face. "Oh Bernd, I do love you so *much,*" I couldn't help whispering, leaning forward to do it regardless of Helena who sat next to him; and seeing by Helena's stare that she had heard, and feeling recklessly cheerful at having got back to him, I turned on her and said,

"Well, he shouldn't smile at me in that darling way."

The Gräfin laughed gently, so I knew she thought my manners bad. I've learned that when she laughs gently she disapproves, just as I've learned that when she says with a placid sigh that war is terrible and must be avoided, all her hopes are bound up in its not being avoided. Her only son is in the Cuirassiers, and is, Kloster says, a naturally unsuccessful person. War is his chance of promotion, of making a career. It is also his chance of death or maiming, as I said to Helena on Sunday at Köseritz when she was talking about her brother and his chances if there is war to the pastor, who was calling hat in hand and very full of bows.

She stared at me, and so did the pastor. I'm afraid I plumped into the conversation impetuously.

"I had sooner," said Helena, "that Werner were dead or maimed for life than that he should not make a career. One's brother must not, cannot be a failure."

And the pastor bowed and exclaimed, "That is well and finely said. That is full of pride, of the true German patrician pride."

Helena, you see, forgot, as Germans some-

times do, not to be natural. She said straight but it was a career she wanted for her brother. She forgot the usual talk of patriotism and the glory of being mangled on behalf of Hohenzollerns.

Yesterday the menservants disappeared, and women waited on us. There was no jolt in the machinery. It went on as smoothly as though the change had been weeks ago. Even the butler, who certainly is too old to fight, vanished.

Bernd comes in whenever he can. Luckily we're quite close to the General Staff Headquarters here, and he has his meals with us. He persists that the war will be kept rigidly to Austria and Servia, and therefore will be over in a week or two. He says Sir Edward Grey has soothed bellicose governments before now, and will be able to do so again. He talks of the madness of war, and of how no Government nowadays would commit such a sheer stupidity as starting it. I listen to him, and am convinced and comforted; then I go back to the others, and my comfort slips away again. For the others are so *sure*. There's no question for them, no doubt. They don't say so, any of them, neither the Graf, nor the Gräfin, nor the son Werner who was here yesterday nor Bernd's Colonel who dined here last

night, nor any of the other people, Government officials who come to see the Graf, and women friends who come to see the Gräfin. They don't say war is certain, but each one of them has the look of satisfaction and relief people have when they get something they've wanted very much for a very long time and sigh out "At last!" Some of them let out their satisfaction more than others,—Bernd's Colonel, for instance, who seems particularly hilarious. He was very hilarious last night, though not ostensibly about war. If the possibility of war is mentioned, as of course it constantly is, they at once all shake their heads as if to order, and look serious, and say God grant it may even now be avoided, or something like that; just as the newspapers do. And last night at dinner somebody added a hope, expressed with a very grave face, that the people of Germany wouldn't get out of hand and force war upon the Government against its judgment.

I thought that rather funny. Especially after two hours in the morning with Kloster, who explained that the Government is arranging everything that is happening, managing public opinion, creating the exact amount of enthusiasm and aggressiveness it

wishes to have behind it, just as it did in 1870 when it wanted to bring about the war with France. I know it isn't proper for a *junges Mädchen* to talk at dinner unless she is asked a question, and I know she mustn't have an opinion about anything except bonbons and flowers, and I also know that a *junges Mädchen* who is betrothed is expected to show on all occasions such extreme modesty, such a continuous downcast eye, that it almost amounts to being ashamed of herself; yet I couldn't resist leaning across the table to the man who said that, a high official in the *Ministerium des Innern,* and saying "But your public is so disciplined and your Government so almighty—" and was going on to ask him what grounds he had for his fears that a public in that condition would force the Government's hand, for I was interested and wanted dreadfully to hear what he would say, when the Gräfin slipped in, smiling gently.

"My dear new niece," she said, looking round the table at everybody, "promises to become a most excellent little German. See how she already recognizes and admires our restraint on the one hand, and on the other, our power."

The Colonel, who was sitting on one side of me, laughed, raised his glass, and begged me to

permit him to drink my health and the health of that luckiest of young men, Lieutenant von Inster. "Old England forever!" he exclaimed, bowing over his glass to me, "The England that raises such fair flowers and allows Germany to pluck them. Long may she continue these altruistic activities. Long may the homes of Germany be decorated with England's fairest products."

By this time he was on his feet, and they were toasting England and me. They were all quite enthusiastic, and I felt so proud and pleased, with Bernd sitting beside me looking so proud and pleased. "England!" they called out, lifting their glasses, "England and the new alliance!" And they bowed and smiled to me, and came round one by one and clinked their glasses against mine.

Then Bernd had to make a little speech and thank the Colonel, and you can't think how beautifully he speaks, and not a bit shy, and saying exactly the right things. Then the Graf actually got up and said something—I expect etiquette forced him to or he never would have—but once he was in for it he did it with the same unfaltering fluency and appropriateness that Bernd had surprised me with. He said they—the Köser-

itzes and Insters—welcomed the proposed marriage between Bernd and myself, not alone for the many graces, virtues, and, above all gifts —(picture the abstracted Graf reeling off these compliments! You should have seen my open mouth)—that so happily adorned the young lady, great and numerous though they were, but also because such a marriage would still further cement the already close union existing between two great countries of the same faith, the same blood, and the same ideals. "Long may these two countries," he said, "who carry in their hands the blazing torches of humanity and civilization, march abreast down the pages of history, writing it in glorious letters as they march." Then he sat down, and instantly relapsed into silence and abstraction. It was as if a candle had been blown out.

They're all certainly very kind to me, the people I've met here, and say the nicest things about England. They're in love with her, as I used to tell Frau Berg's boarders, but openly and enthusiastically, not angrily and reluctantly as the boarders were. I've not heard so many nice things about England ever as I did yesterday. I loved hearing them, and felt all lit up.

We went out on the balcony overlooking the

Thiergarten after dinner. The Graf's chief had sent for him, and Bernd and some of the men had gone away too, but more people kept dropping in and joining us on the balcony watching the crowds. The Brandenburger Thor is close on our left, and the Reichstag is a stone's throw across the road on our right. When the crowd saw the officers in our group, they yelled for joy and flung their hats in the air. The Colonel, in his staff officer's uniform, was the chief attraction. He seemed unaware that there was a crowd, and talked to me in much the same hilarious and flowery strain he had talked at the Oberförsterei, saying a great number of things about hair and eyes and such. I know I've got hair and eyes; I've had them all my life, so what's the use of wasting time telling me about them? I tried all I knew to get him to talk about what he really thought of the chances of war, but quite in vain.

Do you know what time it is? Nearly eight, and the *Deutschland über Alles* business has already started in the streets. There are little crowds of people, looking so tiny and black, not a bit as if they were real, and had blood in them and could be hurt, already on the steps of the Reichstag eagerly reading the morning papers. I must get

dressed and go down and hear if anything fresh has happened. Good-bye my own loved mother,—I'll write whenever I get a moment. And don't forget, mother darling, that if you're worried about my being here I'll start straight off for Switzerland. But if you're *not* worried I wouldn't like to interrupt my lessons. They really are very important things for our future.

Your Chris.

Berlin,
Friday afternoon, July 31st.

My sweetest mother,

Your letters have been following me about, to Köseritz and to Frau Berg's, where of course you didn't know I wouldn't be. I went to Frau Berg's today and found your last two. I love you, my precious mother, and thank you for all your dearness and sweet unselfish understanding about Bernd and me. You have always been my closest, dearest friend, as well as my own darling mother. I seem now to be living in a sort of bath of love. Can anything more ever be added to it? I feel as if I had reached the very innermost heart of happiness. Wonderful how one carries about such a precious consciousness. It's like something magic and hidden that takes care of one, keeping one untouched and unharmed; while outside, day and night, there's this terrible noise of a people gone mad.

You wrote to me last sitting under a cherry tree, you said, in the orchard at the back of your hotel at Glion, and you talked of the col-

our of the lake far down below through the leaves of walnut trees, and of the utter peace. Here day and night, day and night, since Wednesday, soldiers in new grey uniforms pass through the Brandenburger Thor down the broad road to Charlottenburg. Their tramp never stops. I can see them from my window tramping, tramping away down the great straight road; and crowds that don't seem to change or dwindle watch them and shout. Where do the soldiers all come from? I never dreamed there could be so many in the world, let alone in Berlin; and Germany isn't even at war! But it's no use asking questions, or trying to talk about it. I've found the word "Why?" in this house is not only useless but improper. Nobody will talk about anything; I suppose they don't need to, for they all seem perfectly to *know*. They're in the inner circle in this house. They're not the public. The public is that shouting, perspiring mob out there watching the soldiers, and Frau Berg and her boarders are the public, and so are the soldiers themselves. The public here are all the people who obey, and pay, and don't know; an immense multitude of slaves,—abject, greedy, pitiful. I don't think I ever could have imagined a thing so pitiful to see as these respect-

able middle-aged Berlin citizens, fathers of families, careful livers on small incomes, clerks, pastors, teachers, professors, drunk and mad out there publicly on the pavement, dancing with joy because they think the great moment they've been taught to wait for has come, and they're going to get suddenly rich, scoop in wealth from Russia and France, get up to the top of the world and be able to kick it. That's what I saw over and over again today as I somehow got through to Frau Berg's to fetch your letters. An ordinary person from an ordinary country wants to cover these heated elderly gentlemen up, and hide them out of sight, so shocking are they to one's sense of respect and reverence for human beings. Imagine decent citizens, paunchy and soft with beer and sitting in offices, wearing cheap straw hats and carefully mended and brushed black coats, *dancing* with excitement on the pavement, and nobody thinking it anything but fine and creditable, at the prospect of their children's blood going to be shed, and everybody's children's blood, except the blood of those safe children, the children of the Hohenzollerns!

The weather is fiercely hot. There's a brassy sky without a cloud, and all the leaves of the trees in the Thiergarten are shiny and

motionless as if they were cut out of metal. A little haze of dust hangs perpetually along the Lindens and the road to Charlottenburg,—not much of it, because the roads are too well kept, but enough to show that the troops never leave off tramping. And all down where they pass, on each side, are the perspiring crowds of people, red and apoplectic with excitement and heat, women and children and babies mixed up in one heaving, frantic mass. The windows of the houses on each side of the Brandenburger Thor are packed with people all day long, and the noise of patriotism doesn't leave off for an instant.

It's a very ugly noise. The only place where I can get away from it—and I do hate noise, it really *hurts* my ears—is the bathroom here, which is a dark cupboard with no window, in the very middle of the house. I thought it a dreadful bathroom when I first saw it, but now I'm grateful that it can't be aired. The house was built years and years before Germans began to wash, and it wasn't till the Köseritzes came that a bath was wanted. Then it had to be put in any hole, and this hole is the one place where there is silence. Everywhere else, in every room in the house, it is as if one were living next door to a dozen public

houses in the worst slums of London and it were always Saturday night. I do think the patriotism of an unattacked, aggressive country is a hideous thing.

Bernd got me somehow through the crowd to the calmer streets on the way to Frau Berg. He didn't want me to go out at all, but I want to see what I can. The Kaiser rushed through the Brandenburger Thor in his car as we went out. You never saw such a scene as then. It was frightening, like a mob of lunatics let loose. Every time he is seen tearing along the streets there's this wild scene, Bernd says. He has suddenly leaped to the topmost top of popularity, for he's the dispenser now of the great lottery in which all the draws are going to be prizes. You know there isn't a German, not the cleverest, not the most sober, who doesn't regularly and solemnly buy lottery tickets. Aren't they, apart from all the other things they are, the *funniest* people. So immature in wisdom, so top-heavy with dangerous knowledge that their youngness in wisdom makes them use wrongly. If they hadn't got the latest things in guns and equipment they would be quiet, and wouldn't think of fighting.

Bernd made me promise to wait at Frau

Berg's till he could fetch me, and as he didn't get back till two o'clock, and Frau Berg very amiably said I must be her guest at the well-known mid-day meal, I found myself once more in the bosom of the boarders. Only this time I sat proudly on Frau Berg's right, in the place of honour next to Doctor Krummlaut, instead of in the obscurity of my old seat at the dark end near the door.

It was so queer, and so different. There was the same Wanda, resting her dishes on my left shoulder, which she always used to do, not only so as to attract my attention but as a convenience to herself, because they were hot and heavy. There were the same boarders, except the red-mouthed bank-clerk and another young man. Hilda Seeberg was there, and the Swede, and Doctor Krummlaut; and of course Frau Berg, massive in her tight black dress buttoned up the front without a collar to it, the big brooch she fastens it with at the neck half hidden by her impressive double chins, which flow down as majestically as a patriarch's beard. We had the same food, the same heat, and I'm sure the same flies. But the nervous tension there used to be, the tendency to quarrel, the pugnacious political arguing with me, the gibes at England, were gone. I don't

know whether it was because I'm engaged to a Prussian officer that they were so very polite—I was tremendously congratulated,—but they were certainly different about England. It may of course have been their general happiness—happiness makes one so kind all round! —for here too was the content, the satisfaction of those who, after painful waiting, get what they want. It was expressed very noisily, not with the restraint of the Köseritzes, but it was the same thing really. The Berg atmosphere was more like the one in the streets. Where the Gräfin in her pleasure became only more calm, the boarders were abandoned,—excited like savages dancing round the fire their victims are to roast at. Frau Berg rumbled and shook with her relief, like some great earthquake, and didn't mind a bit apparently about the tremendous rise there has been in prices this week. What will she get, I wonder, by war, except struggle and difficulty and departing boarders? Being a guest, I had to be polite and let them say what they liked without protest,—really, the disabilities of guests! I couldn't argue, as I would have if I'd still been a boarder, which was a pity, for meanwhile I've learned a lot of German and could have said a great many things and been as natural as I

liked here away from the Gräfin's gentle smile reminding me that I'm not behaving. But I had to sit and listen smilingly, and of course show none of my horror at their attitude, for more muzzling even than being a guest is being the betrothed of a Prussian officer. *They* don't know what sort of a Prussian officer he is, how different, how truly educated, how full of dislike for the base things they worship and want; and he, caught by birth in the Prussian chains, shall not be betrayed by me who love him. Here he is, caught anyhow for the present, and he must do his duty; but someday we're going away,—he, and I, and you, little mother darling, when there's no war anywhere in sight and therefore no duty to stay for, and we'll go and live in America, and he'll take off all those buttons and spurs and things, and we'll give ourselves up to freedom, and harmlessness, and art, and beauty, and we'll have friends who neither intrigue, which is what the class at the top here lives by, nor who waste their lives being afraid, which is what all the other classes here spend their lives being.

"At last we are going to wipe off old scores against France," Doctor Krummlaut spluttered through his soup today at Frau Berg's with shining eyes,—I should have thought it

was France who had the old scores that need wiping—"and Russia, the barbarian Colossus, will topple over and choke in its own blood."

Then Frau Berg capped that with sentiments even more bloodthirsty.

Then the Swede, who never used to speak, actually raised her voice in terms of blood too, and expressed a wish to see a Cossack strung up by his heels to every electric-light standard along the Lindens.

Then Hilda Seeberg said if her Papa—that Papa she told me once she hadn't at all liked—were only alive, it would be the proudest moment of his life when, at the head of his regiment, he would go forth to slay President Poincaré. "And if," she said, her eyes flashing, "owing to his high years his regiment was no longer able to accept his heroic leadership, he would, I know, proceed secretly to France as an assassin, and bomb the infamous Poincaré, —bomb him in the name of our Kaiser, of our Fatherland, and of our God."

"Amen," said Frau Berg, very loud.

I flew to Bernd when he came. It was as if a door had been flung open, and the freshness and sanity of early morning came into the room when he did. I hung on his arm, and

looked up into his dear shrewd eyes, so clear and kind, so full of wisdom. The boarders were with one accord servile to him; even Doctor Krummlaut, a clever man with far better brains probably than Bernd. Bernd, from habit, stiffened and became unapproachable the instant the middle class public in the shape of the congratulatory boarders appeared. He doesn't even know he's like that, his training has made it second nature. You should have seen his lofty, complete indifference. It was dreadfully rude really, and oh how they loved him for it! They simply adored him, and were ready to lick his boots. It was so funny to see them sidling about him, all of them wagging their tails. He was the master, come among the slaves. But to think that even Doctor Krummlaut should sidle!

There's a most terrific *extra* noise going on outside. I can hardly hear myself write. I don't know whether to run and find out what it is, or retreat to the bathroom. My ears won't stand much more,—I shall get deaf, and not be able to play.

Later.

What has happened is that special editions of the papers have appeared announcing that

the Kaiser has decreed a state of war for the whole of Germany. Well. They've done it now. For I did extract from a very cheerful-looking caller I met coming upstairs to the drawingroom that a state of war is followed as inevitably by the real thing as a German betrothal is followed by marriage. One is as committal as the other, he said. It is the rarest thing, and produces an immense scandal, for an engagement to be broken off; and, explained the caller looking extremely pleased,—he was a man-caller, and therefore more willing to stop and talk—to proceed backwards from a state of war to the *status quo ante* might produce the unthinkable result of costing the Kaiser his throne.

"You can imagine, my most gracious Miss," said the caller, "that His Majesty would never permit a calamity so colossal to overtake his people, whose welfare he has continually and exclusively in his all-highest thoughts. Therefore you may take it from me as completely certain that war is now assured."

"But nobody has done anything to you," I said.

He gazed at me a moment, and then smiled. "High politics, and little heads," he said.

"High politics, and little women's heads,—" and went on up the stairs smiling and shaking his own.

I do wish they wouldn't keep on talking as though my head were so dreadfully small. Never in my life have people taken so utterly and complacently for granted that I'm stupid.

Well, I feel very sick at heart. How long will it be before Bernd too will be one of that marching column on the Charlottenburger Chaussée. He won't go away from me that way, I know. He's on the Staff, and will go more splendidly; but those men in the new grey uniforms tramping day and night are symbols each one of them of departing happiness, of a closed chapter, of the end of something that can never be the same again.

Your tired Chris.

Before Breakfast.

Berlin, Sat., Aug. 1st, 1914.

My blessed little mother,

I've seen a thing I don't suppose I'll forget. It was yesterday, after the news came that Germany had sent Russia an ultimatum about instantly demobilizing, demanding an answer by eleven this morning. The sensation when this was known was tremendous. The Gräfin was shaken out of her calm into exclamations of joy and fear,—joy that the step had been taken, fear lest Russia should obey, and there be no war after all.

We had to shut the windows to be able to hear ourselves talk. Some women friends of the Gräfin's who were here—we had no men with us—instantly left to drive by back streets to the Schlossplatz to see the sight it must be there, and the Gräfin, saying that we too must witness the greatest history of the world's greatest nation in the making, sent for a taxi —her chauffeur has gone—and prepared to follow. We had to wait ages for the taxi, but it was lucky we had to, else we might have gone

and come back and missed seeing the Kaiser come out and speak to the crowd. We went a long way round, but even so all Germany seemed to be streaming towards the Lindens and the part at the end where the palace is. I don't expect we ever would have got there if it hadn't been that a cousin of the Gräfin's, a very smart young officer in the Guards, saw us in the taxi as it was vainly trying to cross the Friedrichstrasse, and flicking the obstructing policemen on one side with a sort of little kick of his spur, came up all amazement and salutes to inquire of his most gracious cousin what in the world she was doing in a taxi. He said it was hopeless to try to get to the Schlossplatz in it, but if we would allow him to escort us on foot he would be proud—the gracious cousin would permit him to offer her his arm, and the young ladies would keep very close behind him.

So we set out, and it was surprising the way he got us through. If the crowd didn't fall apart instantly of itself at his approach, an obsequious policeman—one of those same Berlin policemen who are so rude to one if one is alone and really in need of help—sprang up from nowhere and made it. It's as far from the Friedrichstrasse to the Schlossplatz as it is from here to the Friedrichstrasse, but we did

it very much quicker than we did the first half in the taxi, and when we reached it there they all were, the drunken crowds—that's the word that most exactly describes them—yelling, swaying, cursing the ones in their way or who trod on their feet, shouting hurrahs and bits of patriotic songs, every one of them decently dressed, obviously respectable people in ordinary times. That's what is so constantly strange to me,—these solid burghers and their families behaving like drunken hooligans. Somehow a spectacled professor with a golden chain across his blackwaistcoated and impressive front, just roaring incoherently, just opening his mouth and hurling any sort of noise out of it till the veins on his neck and forehead look as though they would burst, is the strangest sight in the world to me. I can imagine nothing stranger, nothing that makes one more uncomfortable and ashamed. It is what will always jump up before my eyes in the future at the words German patriotism. And to see a stout elderly lady, who ought to be presiding with slow dignity in some ordered home, hoarse with shouting, tear the feathered hat she otherwise only uses tenderly on Sundays off her respectable grey head and wave it frantically, screaming *hochs* every time a prince is seen or a

general or one of the ministers, makes one want to cry with shame at the indignity put upon poor human beings, at the exploiting of their passions, in the interests of one family.

The Gräfin's smart cousin got us on to some steps and stood with us, so that we should not be pushed off them instantly again, as we would have been if he had left us. I think they were the steps of a statue, or fountain, or something like that, but the whole whatever it was was so covered with people, encrusted with them just like one of those sticky fly-sticks is black with flies, that I don't know what it was really. I only know that it wasn't a house, and that we were quite close to the palace, and able to look down at the sea beneath us, the heaving, roaring sea of distorted red faces, all with their mouths wide open, all blistering and streaming in the sun.

The Gräfin, who had recovered her calm in the presence of her inferiors of the middle classes, put up her eyeglasses and examined them with interest and indulgence. Helena stared. The cousin twisted his little moustache, standing beside us protectingly, very elegant and slender and nonchalant, and remarked at intervals, *"Fabelhafte Enthusiasmus, was?"*

It came into my mind that Beerbohm Tree must sometimes look on like that at a successful dress rehearsal of his well-managed stage crowds, with the same nonchalant satisfaction at the excellent results, so well up to time, of careful preparation.

Of course I said *"Colossal"* to the cousin, when he expressed his satisfaction more particularly to me.

"Dreckiges Volk, die Russen," he remarked, twisting his little moustache's ends up. *"Werden lernen was es heisst, frech sein gegen uns. Wollen sie blau und schwartz dreschen."*

You know German, so I needn't take its peculiar flavour out by transplanting the young man's remarks.

"Oh pardon—aber meine Gnädigste—tausendmal pardon—" he protested the next minute in a voice of tremendous solicitude, having been pushed rather hard and suddenly against me by a little boy who had scrambled down off whatever it was he was hanging on to; and he turned on the little boy, who I believe had tumbled off rather than scrambled, with his hand flashing to his sword, ready to slash at whoever it was had dared push against him, an officer; and seeing it was a child and therefore not *satisfactionsfähig* as they say, he merely called him

an *infame* and *verfluchte Bengel* and smacked his face so hard that he would have been knocked down if there had been room to fall in.

As it was, he was only hurled violently against the side of a man in a black coat and straw hat who looked like an elderly confidential clerk, so respectable and complete with his short grey beard and spectacles, who was evidently the father, for he instantly on his own account smacked the boy on his other ear, and sweeping off his hat entreated the Herr Leutnant to forgive the boy on account of his extreme youth.

The cousin, whom by now I didn't like, was beginning very severely to advise the parent jolly well to see to it, or German words to that effect, that his idiotic boy didn't repeat such insolences, or by hell, etc., etc., when there was such a blast of extra noise and hurrahing that the rest of his remarks were knocked out of his mouth. It was the Kaiser, come out on the balcony of the palace.

The cousin became rigid, and stood at the salute. The air seemed full of hats and handkerchiefs and delirious shrieking. The Kaiser put up his hand.

"Majestät is going to speak," exclaimed the Gräfin, her calm fluttered into fragments.

There was an immense instantaneous hush, uncanny after all the noise. Only the little boy with the boxed ears continued to call out, but not patriotically. His father, efficient and Prussian, put a stop to that by seizing his head, buttoning it up inside his black coat, and holding his arm tightly over it, so that no struggles of suffocation could get it free. There was no more noise, but the little boy's legs, desperately twitching, kicked their dusty little boots against the cousin's shins, and he, standing at the salute with his body rigidly turned towards Majestät, was unable to take the steps his outraged honour, let alone the pain in his shins, called for.

I was so much interested in this situation, really absorbed by it, for the little boy unconsciously was getting quite a lot of his own back, his little boots being sturdy and studded with nails, and the father, all eyes and ears for Majestät, not aware of what was happening, that positively I missed the first part of the speech. But what I did hear was immensely impressive. I had seen the Kaiser before, you remember; that time he was in London with the Kaiserin, in 1912 or 1913 I think it was, and we were staying with Aunt Angela in Wilton Crescent and we saw him driving one after-

noon in a barouche down Birdcage Walk. Do you remember how cross he looked, hardly returning the salutations he got? We said he and she must have been quarrelling, he looked so sulky. And do you remember how ordinary he looked in his top hat and black coat, just like any cross and bored middle-class husband? There was nothing royal about him that day except the liveries on the servants, and they were England's. Yesterday things were very different. He really did look like the royal prince of a picture book, a real War Lord,—impressive and glittering with orders flashing in the sun. We were near enough to see him perfectly. There wasn't much crossness or boredom about him this time. He was, I am certain, thoroughly enjoying himself,—unconsciously of course, but with that immense thrilled enjoyment all leading figures at leading moments must have: Sir Galahad, humbly glorying in his perfect achievement of negations; Parsifal, engulfed in an ecstasy of humble gloating over his own worthiness as he holds up the Grail high above bowed, adoring heads; Beerbohm Tree—I can't get away from theatrical analogies—coming before the curtain on his most successful first night, meek with happiness. Hasn't it run through the ages, this

great humility at the moment of supreme success, this moved self-depreciation of the man who has pulled it off, the "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us" attitude,—quite genuine at the moment, and because quite genuine so extraordinarily moving and impressive? Really one couldn't wonder at the people. The Empress was there, and a lot of officers and princes and people, but it was the Emperor alone that we looked at. He came and stood by himself in front of the others. He was very grave, with a real look of solemn exaltation. Here was royalty in all its most impressive trappings, a prince of the fairy-tales, splendidly dressed, dilated of nostril, flashing of eye, the defender of homes, the leader to glory, the object of the nation's worship and belief and prayers since each of its members was a baby, become visible and audible to thousands who had never seen him before, who had worshipped him by faith only. It was as though the people were suddenly allowed to look upon God. There was a profound awe in the hush. I believe if they hadn't been so tightly packed together they would all have knelt down.

Well, it is easy to stir a mob. One knows how easily one is moved oneself by the cheapest emotions, by something that catches one on

the sentimental side, on that side of one that through all the years has still stayed clinging to one's mother's knee. We've often talked of this, you and I, little mother. You know the sort of thing, and have got that side yourself,—even you, you dear objective one. The three things up to now that have got me most on that side, got me on the very raw of it—I'll tell you now, now that I can't see your amused eyes looking at me with that little quizzical questioning in them—the three things that have broken my heart each time I've come across them and made me only want to sob and sob, are when Kurwenal, mortally wounded, crawls blindly to Tristan's side and says, *"Schilt mich nicht dass der Treue auch mitkommt,"* and Siegfried's dying *"Brünnhild, heilige Braut,"* and Tannhäuser's dying *"Heilige Elisabeth, bitte fur mich."* All three German things, you see. All morbid things. Most of the sentimentality seems to have come from Germany, an essentially brutal place. But of course sentimentality is really diluted morbidness, and therefore first cousin to cruelty. And I have a real and healthy dislike for that Tannhäuser opera.

But seeing how the best of us—which is you—have these little hidden swamps of emotion-

alness, you can imagine the effect of the Kaiser yesterday at such a moment in their lives on a people whose swamps are carefully cultivated by their politicians. Even I, rebellious and hostile to the whole attitude, sure that the real motives beneath all this are base, and constitutionally unable to care about Kaisers, was thrilled. Thrilled by him, I mean. Oh, there was enough to thrill one legitimately and tragically about the poor people, so eager to offer themselves, their souls and bodies, to be an unreasonable sacrifice and satisfaction for the Hohenzollerns. His speech was wonderfully suited to the occasion. Of course it would be. If he were not able to prepare it himself his officials would have seen to it that some properly eloquent person did it for him; but Kloster says he speaks really well on cheap, popular lines. All the great reverberating words were in it, the old big words ambitious and greedy rulers have conjured with since time began,—God, Duty, Country, Hearth and Home, Wives, Little Ones, God again—lots of God.

Perhaps you'll see the speech in the papers. What you won't see is that enormous crowd, struck quiet, struck into religious awe, crying quietly, men and women like little children gathered to the feet of, positively, a heavenly

Father. "Go to your homes," he said, dismissing them at the end with uplifted hand,—"go to your homes, and pray."

And we went. In dead silence. That immense crowd. Quietly, like people going out of church; moved, like people coming away from communion. I walked beside Helena, who was crying, with my head very high and my chin in the air, trying not to cry too, for then they would have been more than ever persuaded that I'm a promising little German, but I did desperately want to. I could hardly *not* cry. These cheated people! Exploited and cheated, led carefully step by step from babyhood to a certain habit of mind necessary to their exploiters, with certain passions carefully developed and encouraged, certain ancient ideas, anachronisms every one of them, kept continually before their eyes,—why, if they *did* win in their murderous attack on nations who have done nothing to them, what are they going to get individually? Just wind; the empty wind of big words. They'll be told, and they'll read it in the newspapers, that now they're great, the mightiest people in the world, the one best able to crush and grind other nations. But not a single happiness *really* will be added to the private life of a single citizen belonging

to the vast class that pays the bill. For the rest of their lives this generation will be poorer and sadder, that's all. Nobody will give them back the money they have sacrificed, or the ruined businesses, and nobody can give them back their dead sons. There'll be troops of old miserable women everywhere, who were young and content before all the glory set in, and troops of dreary old men who once had children, and troops of cripples who used to look forward and hope. Yes, I too obeyed the Kaiser and went home and prayed; but what I prayed was that Germany should be beaten—so beaten, so punished for this tremendous crime, that she will be jerked by main force into line with modern life, dragged up to date, taught that the world is too grown up now to put up with the smashings and destructions of a greedy and brutal child. It is queer to think of the fear of God having to be kicked into anybody, but I believe with Prussians it's the only way. They understand kicks. They respect brute strength exercised brutally. I can hear their roar of derision, if Christ were to come among them today with His gentle, "Little children, love one another."

Your Chris.

Berlin,
Sunday, August 2nd, 1914.

My precious mother,

Just think,—when I had my lesson yesterday Kloster wouldn't talk either about the war or the Kaiser. For a long time I thought he was ill; but he wasn't, he just wouldn't talk. I told him about Friday, and the Kaiser's *"Geht nach Hause und betet,"* and how I had felt about it and the whole thing, and I expected a flood of illuminating and instructive and fearless comment from him; and instead he was dumb. And not only dumb, but he fidgeted while I talked, and at last stopped me altogether and bade me go on playing.

Then I asked him if he were ill, and he said, "No, why should I be ill?"

"Because you're different,—you don't talk," I said.

And he said, "It is only women who always talk."

So then I got on with my playing, and just wondered in silence.

I ran against Frau Kloster in the passage as

I was coming out, and asked her if there was anything wrong, and she too said, "No, what should there be wrong?"

"Because the Master's different," I said. "He won't talk."

And she said, "My dear Mees Chrees, these are great days we live in, and one cannot be as usual."

"But the Master—" I said. "Just these great days—you'd think he'd be pouring out streams of all the things that most need saying—"

And she shrugged her shoulders and merely repeated, "One is not as usual."

So I came away, greatly puzzled. I had expected bread, and here I was going off with nothing but an unaccountable stone. Kloster and Bernd are the two solitary sane and wise people I know here in this place of fever, the two I trust, to whom I say what I really think and feel, and I went to Kloster yesterday athirst for wisdom, for that detached, critical picking out one by one of the feathers of the imperial bird, the Prussian eagle, that I find so wholesome, so balance-restoring, so comforting, in what is now a very great isolation of spirit. And he was dumb. I can't get over it.

I've not seen Bernd since, as he is frightfully busy and wasn't able to come yesterday at all, but he's coming to lunch today, and perhaps he'll be able to explain Kloster. I've been practising all the morning,—it will seem to you an odd thing to have done while Rome is burning, but I did it savagely, with a feeling of flinging defiance at this topsy-turvy world, of slitting its ugliness in spite of itself with bright spears of music, insisting on intruding loveliness on its preoccupation, the loveliness created by its own brains in the days before Prussia got the upper hand. All the morning I practised the Beethoven violin concerto, and the naked, slender radiance of it without the orchestra to muffle it up in a background, enchanted me into forgetting.

The crowds down there are soberer since Friday, and I didn't have to go into the bathroom to play. Now that war is upon them the women seem to have started thinking a little what it may really mean, and the men aren't quite so ready incoherently to roar. They keep on going to church,—the churches have been having services at unaccustomed moments throughout yesterday, of course by order, and are going on like that today too, for the churches are very valuable to Authority in

nourishing the necessary emotions in the people at a time like this. The people were told by the Kaiser to pray, and so they do pray. It is useful to have them praying, it quiets them and gets them out of the streets and helps the authorities. Berlin is really the most godless place. Religion is the last thing anybody thinks of. Nobody dreams of going to church unless there is going to be special music there or a prince, and as for the country, my two Sundays there might have been week-days except for the extra food. It is true on each of them I saw a pastor, but each time he came to the family I was with, they didn't go to him, to his church. Now there's suddenly this immense recollection of God, turned on by Authority just as one turns on an electric light switch and says "Let there be light," and there is light. So I picture the Kaiser, running his finger down his list of available assets and coming to God. Then he rings for an official, and says, "Let there be God"; and there *is* God.

I'm not really being profane. It isn't really God at all I'm talking about. It's what German Authority finds convenient to turn on and off, according as it suits what it wishes to obtain. It isn't God. It's just a tap.

Later.

Bernd came to lunch, but also unfortunately so did his chief. They both arrived together after we had begun,—there's a tremendous *aller et venir* all day in the house, and sometimes the traffic on the stairs to the drawing-room gets so congested that nothing but a London policeman could deal with it. I could only say ordinary things to Bernd, and he went away, swept off by his Colonel, directly afterwards. He did manage to whisper he would try to come in to dinner tonight and get here early, but he hasn't come yet and it's nearly half past seven.

The Graf was at lunch, and two other men who ate their food as if they had to catch a train, and they talked so breathlessly while they ate that I can't think why they didn't choke; and there was great triumph and excitement because the Germans crossed into Luxembourg this morning on their way to France, marching straight through the expostulations and entreaties of the Grand Duchess, blowing her aside, I gather, like so much rather amusing thistledown. It seemed to tickle the Graf, whom I have not before seen tickled and hadn't

imagined ever could be; but this idea of a *junges Mädchen*—(*"Sie soll ganz niedlich sein,"* threw in one of the gobbling men. *"Ja ganz appetitlich,"* threw in the other; *"Na, es geht,"* said the Colonel with a shrug—)—motoring out to bar the passage of a mighty army, trying to stop thousands of bayonets by lifting up one little admonitory kitten's paw, shook him out of his gravity into a weird, uncanny chuckling.

The Colonel, who was as genial and hilarious as ever, rather more so than ever, said all the Luxembourg railways would be in German hands by tonight. "It works out as easily and inevitably as a simple arithmetical problem," he laughed; and I heard him tell the Graf German cavalry was already in France at several points.

"Ja, ja," he said, apparently addressing me, for he looked at me and smiled, "when we Germans make war we do not wait till the next day. Everything thought of; everything ready; plenty of oil in the machine; *und dann los."*

He raised his glass. "Delightful young English lady," he said, "I drink to your charming eyes."

There's dinner. I must leave off.

Eleven p. m.

You'll never believe it, but Kloster has been given the Order of the Red Eagle 1st Class, and made a privy councillor and an excellency by the Kaiser this very day. And his most intimate friends, the cleverest talkers among his set, two or three who used to hold forth particularly brilliantly in his rooms on Socialism and the slavish stupidity of Germans, have each had an order and an advancement of some sort. Kloster was at the palace this afternoon. He knew about it yesterday when I was having my lesson. *Kloster.* Of all men. I feel sick.

Bernd didn't come to dinner, but was able to be with me for half an hour afterwards, half an hour of comfort I badly needed, for where can one's feet be set firmly and safely in this upheaving world? The Colonel was at dinner; he comes to nearly every meal; and it was he who started talking about Kloster's audience with Majestät this afternoon.

I jumped as though some one had hit me. "That *can't* be true," I exclaimed, exactly as one calls out quickly if one is suddenly struck.

They all looked at me. Somehow I saw that they had known about it beforehand, and Bernd told me tonight it was the Graf who had drawn the authorities' attention to the desira-

bility of having tongues like Kloster's on the side of the Hohenzollerns.

"Dear child," said the Gräfin gently, "we Germans do not permit our great to go unhonoured."

"But he would never—" I began; then remembered my lesson yesterday and his silence. So that's what it was. He already had his command to attend at the palace and be decorated in his pocket.

I sat staring straight before me. Kloster bought? Kloster for sale? And the Government at such a crisis finding time to bother about him?

"*Ja, ja,*" said the Colonel gaily, as though answering my thoughts—and I found I had been staring, without seeing him, straight into his eyes, "*ja, ja,* we think of everything here."

"Not," gently amended the Gräfin, "that it was difficult to think of honouring so great a genius as our dear Kloster. He has been in Majestät's thoughts for years."

"I expect he has," I said; for Kloster has often told me how they hated him at court, him and his friends, but that he was too well known all over the world for them to be able to interfere with him; something like, I expect, Tolstoi and the Russian court.

The Gräfin looked at me quickly.

"And so has Majestät been in his," I continued.

"Kloster," said the Gräfin very gently, "is a most amusing talker, and sometimes cannot resist saying the witty things that occur to him, however undesirable they may be. We all know they mean nothing. We all understand and love our Kloster. And nobody, as you see, dear child, more than Majestät, with his ever ready appreciation of genius."

I could only sit silent, staring at my plate. Kloster gone. Kloster allowing himself to be gagged by a decoration. I wanted to push the intolerable thought away from me and cry out, "No, it *can't* be."

Why, who can one believe in now? Who is left? There's Bernd, my beloved, my heart's own mate; and as I sat there dumb, and they all triumphed on with their self-congratulations and satisfactions, and Majestät this, and Deutschland that, for an awful moment my faith in Bernd himself began to shake. Suppose he too, he with his Prussian blood and upbringing, fell away and went over in spirit to the side of life that decorates a man in return for the absolute control of his thoughts, rewards him for the disposal of his soul? Kloster,

that freest of critics, had gone over, his German blood after all unable to resist the call to slavery. I never could have believed it. I never *would* have believed it without actual proof. And Bernd? What about Bernd? For I haven't more believed in Kloster than I do in Bernd. Oh, little mother, I was cold with fear.

Then he came. My dear one came for a blessed half hour. And because we, thank God, are betrothed, and so have the right to be alone together, we got rid of those smug triumphant others; and if he had happened not to be able to come, and I had had to wait till tomorrow, all night long thinking of Kloster, I believe I'd have gone mad. For you see one believes so utterly in a person one *does* believe in. At least, I do. I can't manage caution in belief, I can't give prudently, carefully, holding back part, as I'm told a woman does if she is really clever, in either faith or love. And how is one to get on without faith and love? Bernd comforted me. And he comforted me most by my finding how greatly he needed to be comforted himself. He was every bit as profoundly shaken and shocked as I was. Oh, the relief of discovering that!

We clung to each other, and comforted each other like two hurt children. Kloster has been

so much to us both. More, perhaps, here in this place of hypocrisy and self-deceptions, than he would have been anywhere else. He stood for fearlessness, for freedom, for beauty, for all the great things. And now he has gone; silent, choked by the *Rote Adler Orden Erste Klasse.* It is an order with three classes. We wondered bitterly whether he couldn't have been had cheaper,—whether second, or even third class, wouldn't have done it. He is now a *Wirkliche Geheimrath mit dem Prädikat Excellenz.* God rest his soul.

Chris.

Berlin,
Monday, August 3rd, 1914.

Darling own mother,

It's only a matter of hours now before Bernd will have to go, and when he goes I'm coming back to you.

Your Chris.

Berlin,
Monday August 3rd, evening.

Precious mother,

I want to come back to you—directly Bernd has gone I'm coming back to you, and if he doesn't go soon but is used in Berlin at the Staff Head Quarters, as he says now perhaps he may be for a while, I won't stay with the Köseritzes, but go back to Frau Berg's for as long as Bernd is in Berlin, and the day he leaves I start for Switzerland.

I don't know what is happening, but the Köseritzes have suddenly turned different to me. They're making me feel more and more uncomfortable and strange. And there's a gloom about them and the people who have been here today that sets me wondering whether their war plans after all are rolling along quite as smoothly as they thought. I never did quite believe the Köseritzes liked me, any of them, and now I'm sure they don't. Tonight at dinner the Graf's face was a thunder-cloud, and actually the Colonel, who hasn't been all day but came in late for dinner and went again immediately, didn't speak to me

once. Hardly looked at me when he bowed, and his bow was the stiffest thing. I can't ask anybody if there is bad news for Germany, for it would be a most dreadful insult even to suggest there *could* be bad news. Besides, I feel as if I somehow were mixed up in whatever it is. Bernd hasn't been since this morning. I shall go round to Frau Berg tomorrow and ask her if I can have my old room. But oh, little beloved mother, I feel torn in two! I want so dreadfully to get away, to go back to you, and the thought of being at Frau Berg's, just waiting, waiting for the tiny scraps of moments Bernd can come to me, fills me with horror. And yet how can I leave him? I love him so. And once he has gone, shall I ever see him again? If it weren't for him I'd have started for Switzerland yesterday, the moment I heard about Kloster, for the whole reason for my being in Berlin was only Kloster.

And now Kloster says he isn't going to teach me any more. Darling mother, I'm so sorry to have to tell you this, but it's true. He sent round a note this evening saying he regretted he couldn't continue the lessons. Just that. Not another word. I can't make anything out any more. I've got nobody but Bernd to ask, and I only see him in briefest snatches. Of

course I knew the lessons would be strange and painful now, but I thought we could manage, Kloster and I, by excluding everything but the bare teaching and learning, to go on and finish what we've begun. He knows how important it is to me. He knows what this journey here has meant to us, to you and me, the difficulty of it, the sacrifice. I'm very unhappy tonight, darling mother, and selfishly crying out to you. I feel almost like leaving Bernd, and starting for Glion tomorrow. And then when I think of him without me—He's as spiritually alone in this welter as I am. I'm the only one he has, the only human being who understands. Today he said, holding me in his arms—you should see how we cling to each other now as if we were drowning—"When this is over, Chris, when I've paid off my bill of duty and settled with them here to the last farthing of me that I've promised them, we'll go away for ever. We'll never come back. We'll never be caught again."

Berlin,
Tuesday, August 4th, 1914.

My beloved mother,

The atmosphere in this house really is intolerable, and I'm going back to Frau Berg's tomorrow morning. I've settled it with her by telephone, and I can have my old room. However lonely I am in it without my lessons and Kloster, without the reason there was for being there before, I won't have this horrid feeling of being in a place full of sudden and unaccountable hostility. Bernd came this morning, and the Gräfin told him I was out, and he went away again. She couldn't have thought I was out, for I always tell her when I'm going, so she wants to separate us. But why? Why? And oh, it means so much to me to see him, it was so cruel to find out by accident that he had been! A woman who was at lunch happened to say she had met him coming out of the front door as she came in.

"What—was Bernd here?" I exclaimed, half getting up on a sort of impulse to run after him and try and catch him in the street.

"Helena thought you had gone out," said the Gräfin.

"But you *knew* I hadn't," I said, turning on Helena.

"Helena knew nothing of the sort," said the Gräfin severely. "She said what she believed to be true. I must request you, Christine, not to cast doubts on her word. We Germans do not lie."

And the Graf muttered, *"Peinlich, peinlich,"* and pushed back his chair and left the room.

"You have spoilt my husband's lunch," said the Gräfin sternly.

"I am very sorry," I said; and tried to go on with my own, but couldn't see it because I was blinded by tears.

After this there was nothing for it but Frau Berg. I waited till the Gräfin was alone, and then went and told her I thought it better I should go back to the Lützowstrasse, and would like, if she didn't mind, to go tomorrow. It was very *peinlich,* as they say; for however much people want to get rid of you they're always angry if you want to go. I said all I could that was grateful, and there was quite a lot I could say by blotting out the last two days from my remembrance. I did, being greatly at sea and perplexed, ask what it was

that I had done to offend her; though of course she didn't tell me, and was only still more offended at being asked.

I'm going to pack now, and write a letter to Bernd telling him about it, in case Helena should have a second unfortunate conviction that I'm not at home when he comes next. And I do try to be cheerful, little mother, and keep my soul from getting hurt, and when I'm at Frau Berg's I shall feel more normal again I expect. But one has such fears—oh, more than just fears, terrors—Well, I won't go on writing in this mood. I'll pack.

Your own Chris.

At Frau Berg's,
August 4th, 1914, very late.

Precious mother,

I'm coming back to you. Don't be unhappy about me. Don't think I'm coming back mangled, a bleeding thing, because you see, I still have Bernd, I still believe in him—oh, with my whole being. And as long as I do that how can I be anything but happy? It's strange how, now that the catastrophe has come, I'm quite calm, sitting here at Frau Berg's in my old room in the middle of the night writing to you. I think it's because the whole thing is so great that I'm like this, like somebody who has had a mortal blow, and because it's mortal doesn't feel. But this isn't mortal. I've got Bernd and you,—only now I must have great patience. Till I see him again. Till war is over and he comes for me, and I shall be with him always.

I'm coming to you, dear mother. It's finished here. I'm going to describe it all quite calmly to you. I'm not going to be unworthy of Bernd, I won't have less of dignity and patience than he has. If you'd seen him tonight

saying good-bye to me, and stopped by the Colonel! His look as he obeyed—I shan't forget it. When next I'm weak and base I shall remember it, and it will save me.

At dinner there were only the Gräfin and Helena and me, and they didn't speak a word, not only not to me but not to each other, and in the middle a servant brought in a note for the Gräfin from the Graf, he said, and when she had looked at it she got up and went out. We finished our dinner in dead silence, and I was going up to my room when the Gräfin's maid came after me and said would I go to her mistress. She was alone in the drawingroom, sitting at her writing table, though she wasn't writing, and when I came in she said, without turning round, that she must ask me to leave her house at once, that very evening. She said that apart from her private feelings, which were all in favour of my going—she would be quite frank, she said—there were serious political reasons why I shouldn't stay even as long as till tomorrow. The Graf's career, his position in the ministry, their social position, Majestät,—I really don't remember all she said, and it matters so little, so little. I listened, trying to understand, trying to give all my attention to it and disentangle it, while my

heart was thumping so because of Bernd. For I was being turned out in disgrace, and I am his betrothed, and so I am his honour, and whatever of shame there is for me there is of shame for him.

The Gräfin got more and more unsteady in her voice as she went on. She was trying hard to keep calm, but she was evidently feeling so acutely, so violently, that it was distressing to have to watch her. I was so sorry. I wanted to put my arms round her and tell her not to mind so much, that of course I'd go, but if only she wouldn't mind so much whatever it was. Then at last she began to lose her hold on herself, and got up and walked about the room saying things about England. So then I knew. And I knew the answer to everything that has been perplexing me. They'd been afraid of it the last two days, and now they knew it. England isn't going to fold her arms and look on. Oh, how I loved England then! Standing in that Berlin drawingroom in the heart of the Junker-military-official set, all by myself in what I think and feel,—how I loved her! My heart was thumping five minutes before for fear of shame, now it thumped so that I couldn't have said anything if I'd wanted to for gladness and pride. I was a bit

of England. I think to know how much one loves England one has to be in Germany. I forgot Bernd for a moment, my heart was so full of that other love, that proud love for one's country when it takes its stand on the side of righteousness. And presently the Gräfin said it all, tumbled it all out,—that England was going to declare war, and under circumstances so shameful, so full of the well-known revolting hypocrisy, that it made an honest German sick. "Belgium!" she cried, "What is Belgium? An excuse, a pretence, one more of the sickening, whining phrases with which you conceal your gluttonous opportunism—" And so she continued, while I stood silent.

Oh well, all that doesn't matter now,—I'm in a hurry, I want to get this letter off to you tonight. Luckily there's a letter-box a few yards away, so I won't have to face much of those awful streets that are yelling now for England's blood.

I went up and got my things together. I knew Bernd would get the letter I posted to him this morning telling him I was going to Frau Berg's tomorrow, so I felt safe about seeing him, even if he didn't come in to the Köseritzes before I left. But he did come in. He came just as I was going downstairs carrying

my violin-case—how foolish and outside of life that music business seems now—and he seized my hand and took me into the drawingroom.

"Not in here, not in here!" cried the Gräfin, getting up excitedly. "Not again, not ever again does an Englishwoman come into my drawingroom—"

Bernd went to her and drew her hand through his arm and led her politely to the door, which he shut after her. Then he came back to me. "You know, Chris," he said, "about England?"

"Of course—just listen," I answered, for in the street newsboys were yelling *Kriegserklärung Englands,* and there was a great dull roaring as of a multitude of wild beasts who have been wounded.

"You must go to your mother at once—tomorrow," he said. "Before you're noticed, before there's been time to make your going difficult."

I told him the Gräfin had asked me to leave, and I was coming here tonight. He wasted no words on the Köseritzes, but was anxious lest Frau Berg mightn't wish to take me in now. He said he would come with me and see that she did, and place me under her care as part of himself. "And tomorrow you run. You run

to Switzerland, without telling Frau Berg or a soul where you are going," he said. "You just go out, and don't come back. I'll settle with Frau Berg afterwards. You go to the Anhalter station—on your feet, Chris, as though you were going for a walk—and get into the first train for Geneva, Zurich, Lausanne, anywhere as long as it's Switzerland. You'll want all your intelligence. Have you money enough?"

"Yes, yes," I said, feeling every second was precious and shouldn't be wasted; but he opened my violin-case and put a lot of bank-notes into it.

"And have you courage enough?" he asked, taking my face in his hands and looking into my eyes.

Oh the blessedness, the blessedness of being near him, of hearing and seeing him. What couldn't I and wouldn't I be and do for Bernd?

I told him I had courage enough, for I had him, and I wouldn't fail in it, nor in patience.

"We shall want both, my Chris," he said, his face against mine, "oh, my Chris—!"

And then the Colonel walked in.

"Herr Leutnant?" he said, in a raucous voice, as though he were ordering troops about.

At the sound of it Bernd instantly became

rigid and stood at attention,—the perfect automaton, except that I was hanging on his arm.

"*Zur Befehl,* Herr Oberst," he said.

"Take that woman's hand off your arm, Herr Leutnant," said the Colonel sharply.

Bernd gently put my hand off, and I put it back again.

"We are going to be married," I said to the Colonel, "and perhaps I may not see Bernd for a long while after tonight."

"No German officer marries an alien enemy," snapped out the Colonel. "Remove the woman's hand, Herr Leutnant."

Again Bernd gently took my hand, but I held on. "This is good-bye, then?" I said, looking up at him and clinging to him.

He was facing the Colonel, rigid, his profile to me; but he did at that turn his head and look at me. "Remember—" he breathed.

"I forbid all talking, Herr Leutnant," snapped the Colonel.

"Never mind him," I whispered. "What does *he* matter? Remember what, my Bernd, my own beloved?"

"Remember courage—patience—" he murmured quickly, under his breath.

"Silence!" shouted the Colonel. "Take that

woman's hand off your arm, Herr Leutnant. *Kreuzhimmeldonnerwetter nochmal.* Instantly."

Bernd took my hand, and raising it to his face kissed it slowly and looked at me. I shall not forget that look.

The Colonel, who was very red and more like an infuriated machine than a human being, stepped on one side and pointed to the door. "Precede me," he said. "On the instant. March."

And Bernd went out as if on parade.

When shall we see each other again? Only a fortnight, one fortnight and two days, have we been lovers. But such things can't be measured by time. They are of eternity. They are for always. If he is killed, and the rest of my years are empty, we still will have had the whole of life.

And now there's tomorrow, and my getting away. You won't be anxious, dear mother. You'll wait quietly and patiently till I come. I'll write to you on the way if I can. It may take several days to get to Switzerland, and it may be difficult to get out of Germany. I think I shall say I'm an American. Frau Berg, poor thing, will be relieved to find me gone. She only took me in tonight because

of Bernd. While she was demurring on the threshold, when at last I got to her after a terrifying walk through the crowds,—for I was afraid they would notice me and see, as they always do, that I'm English,—his soldier servant brought her a note from him which just turned the scale for me. I'm afraid humanity wouldn't have done it, nor pity, for patriotism and pity don't go well together here.

I wonder if you'll believe how calmly I'm going to bed and to sleep tonight, on the night of what might seem to be the ruin of my happiness. I'm glad I've written everything down that has happened this evening. It has got it so clear to me. I don't want ever to forget one word or look of Bernd's tonight. I don't want ever to forget his patience, his dear look of untouchable dignity, when the Colonel, because he is in authority and can be cruel, at such a moment in the lives of two poor human beings was so unkind.

God bless and keep you, my mother,—my dear sweet mother.

Your Chris.

Halle, Wednesday night,
August 5th, 1914.

I've got as far as this, and hope to get on in an hour or two. We've been stopped to let troop trains pass. They go rushing by one after the other, packed with waving, shouting soldiers, all of them with flowers stuck about them, in their buttonholes and caps. I've been watching them. There's no end to them. And the enthusiasm of the crowds on the platform as they go by never slackens. I'm making for Zürich. I tried for Bâle, but couldn't get into Switzerland that way,—it is *abgesperrt.* I hadn't much difficulty getting a ticket in Berlin. There was such confusion and such a rush at the ticket office that the man just asked me why I wanted to go; and I said I was American and rejoining my mother, and he flung me the ticket, only too glad to get rid of me. Don't expect me till you see me, for we shall be held up lots of times, I'm sure.

I'm all right, mother darling. It was fearfully hot all day, squeezed tight in a third class carriage—no other class to be had. It's cold and draughty in this station by comparison, and I wish I had my coat. I've brought

nothing away with me, except my fiddle and what would go into its case, which was handkerchiefs. Bernd will see that my things get sent on, I expect. I locked everything up in my trunk,—your letters, and all my precious things. An official came along the train at Wittenberg, and after eyeing us all in my compartment suddenly held out his hand to me and said, *"Ihre Papiere."* As I haven't got any I told him about being an American, and as much family history not till then known to me as I could put into German. The other passengers listened eagerly, but not unfriendly. I think if you're a woman, not being old helps one in Germany.

Now I'm going to get some hot coffee, for it has turned cold, I think, and post this. The one thing in life now that seems of desperate importance is to get to you. Oh, little mother, the moment when I reach you! It will be like getting to heaven, like getting at last, after many wanderings, and batterings, to the feet of God.

We *ought* to be at Waldshut, on the frontier, tomorrow morning, but nobody can say for certain, because we may be held up for hours anywhere on the way. Your Chris.

It's a good thing being too tired to think.

Wurzburg,
Thursday, August 6th, 1914,
4 p. m.

I've only got as far as this. *I* was held up this time, not the train. It went on without me. Well, it doesn't matter really; it only keeps me a little longer from you.

We stopped here about ten o'clock this morning, and I was so tired and stiff after the long night wedged in tight in the railway carriage that I got out to get some air and unstiffen myself, instinctively clutching my fiddle-case; and a Bavarian officer on the platform, watching the train with some soldiers, saw me and came over to me at once and demanded to see my papers.

"You are English," he said; and when I said I was American he made a sound like Tcha.

I can't tell you how horrid he was. He kept me standing for two hours in the blazing sun. You can imagine what I felt like when I saw my train going away without me. I asked if I mightn't go into the shade, into the waiting-room, anywhere out of the terrible sun, for I was positively dripping after the first half

hour of it, and his answer to that and to anything else I said in protest was always the same: *"Krieg ist Krieg. Mund halten."*

There was no *reason* why I shouldn't be in the shade, except that he had power to prevent it. Well, he was very young, and I don't suppose had ever had so much power before, so I suppose it was natural, he being German. But it was a most ridiculous position. I tried to see it from that side and be amused, but I wasn't amused. While he went and telephoned to his superiors for instructions he put a soldier to guard me, and of course the people waiting on the platform for trains crowded to look. They decided that I was no doubt a spy, and certainly and manifestly one of the swinish English, they said. I wished then I couldn't understand German. I stood there doing my best to think it was all very funny, but I was too tired to succeed, and hadn't had any breakfast, and they were too rude. Then I tried to think it was just a silly dream, and that I had really got to Glion, and would wake up in a minute in a cool bedroom with the light coming through green shutters, and there'd be the lake, and the mountains opposite with snow on them, and you, my blessed, blessed little mother, calling me to breakfast. But it

was too hot and distinct and horribly consistent to be a dream. And my clothes were getting wetter and wetter with the heat, and sticking to me.

I want to get to you. That's all I think of now. There isn't a train till tonight, and then only as far as Stuttgart. I expect this letter will get to you long before I do, because I may be kept at Stuttgart.

Another officer, higher up than the first one, let me go. He was more decent. He came and questioned me, and said that as he couldn't prove I wasn't American he preferred to risk believing that I was, rather than inconvenience a lady belonging to a friendly nation, or something like that. I don't know what he said really, for by that time I was stupid because of the sun beating down so. But he let me go, and I came here to the restaurant to get something to drink. He came after me, to see that I was not further inconvenienced, he said, so I thought I'd tell him I was going to marry one of his fellow-officers. He changed completely then, when I told him Bernd's name and regiment, and was really polite and really saw that I wasn't further inconvenienced. Dear Bernd! Even just his name saves me.

I went to sleep on the bench in the waiting

room after I had drunk a great deal of iced milk. My fiddle-case was the pillow. Poor fiddle. It seems such a useless, futile thing now.

It was so nice lying down flat, and not having to do anything. The waiter says there's a place I can wash in, and I suppose I'd better go and wash after I've posted this, but I don't want to particularly. I don't want to do anything, particularly, except shut my eyes and wait till I get to you. But I think I'll go out into the sun and warm myself up again, for it's cold in here. Dear mother, I'm a *great deal* nearer to you than I've been for weeks. Won't you borrow a map, and see where Wurzburg is?

Your Chris.

Printed in the United States of America.

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Author of "The Prisoner," "Children of Earth," "Road to Castaly," etc.

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